THE GRAVITY OF REVOLUTION:
THE LEGACY OF ANTICOLONIAL DISCOURSE IN POSTCOLONIAL HAITIAN WRITING, 1804-1934.

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Michael Castro Reyes

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Michael Castro Reyes, Ph. D.

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This dissertation examines the lasting consequences of the anticolonial, antislavery discourses of the Haitian Revolution on the way in which postcolonial Haitians understood the narrative structure of their national history from Independence (1804) to the end of the American Occupation of Haiti (1934). In this study Haitian intuitions of historical time are apprehended through an analysis of nineteenth and early twentieth century Haitian literary and historical works. These texts are scrutinized with respect to (a) formal narrative features such as truncation, ellipsis, elision, prolepsis and analepsis which reveal an implicit understanding of the disposition of the metahistorical categories of "past," "present," and "future" and (b) the analysis of the explicit reflections on history provided by narrators or authors. This dissertation argues, primarily, that the event of the "Haitian Revolution" (1791-1804) was fundamental to Haitian understandings of the emplotment of the whole of Haitian history. Chronologically "past" and "future" events were transformed so that they would be legible as analogical "recurrences" of the revolutionary past; when such manipulations proved difficult, the recent past was sometimes elided altogether. This was possible, in part, because Haitian postcolonialism was imagined as immanently

precarious and thus remained dependent on revolutionary discourses of anticolonialism and radical antislavery. Also important was the analeptic, explicitly anticolonial fantasy of historical erasure in "restoring" the Amerindian name of "Haiti" to what had been the French colony of "Saint-Domingue." The national history thus came to be underwritten by an impossible anachronistic return to the time of the fifteenth century Amerindians at the moment of Independence. This dissertation alleges that Haitian historical time depended upon, and remained largely bound by, this significant anticolonial contradiction. Drawing upon this metahistorical analysis, I ultimately argue both that Haitians' experiences of time in this period are not compatible with "modernity" as it is understood by conceptual historiography, and that the accepted accounts of the historical development of nationalism cannot explain the rise of this sentiment in Haiti.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Michael Reyes earned his Bachelor of Arts in French Education from the University of Arizona in 2005. After having spent one year teaching English in elementary schools in Nîmes in the south of France as part of the Teaching Assistant Program, he began his graduate work at the Department of Romance Studies at Cornell University in 2006.

Throughout his years as a graduate student, Dr. Reyes served as an instructor of record for the Department of Romance Studies and taught all courses of the French language sequence as well as an introductory course in French literature. During a brief exchange with the École Normale Supérieure of Letters and Human Sciences in Lyon, France, Dr. Reyes also taught communicative English language courses.

While at Cornell University, Dr. Reyes was honored with several awards. He received an honorable mention for his teaching from the Department of Romance Studies and was granted a Provost's Diversity Fellowship which enabled him to conduct research and study the Kreyòl language in Québec, Canada.

Dr. Reyes has presented his research on nineteenth century French and Haitian literature at professional conferences in the United States, Canada, and Haiti, including the Nineteenth Century French Studies Conference and the Haitian Studies Conference. He has also been published in the *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History*.

His dissertation, *The Gravity of Revolution: The Legacy of Anticolonial Discourse in Postcolonial Haitian Writings, 1804-1934*, was supervised by Dr. Laurent Dubreuil.

To my grandparents

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A dissertation also requires a surprising amount of day-to-day administrative support and I consider myself particularly lucky to have fallen into the extremely helpful and capable hands of the staff in the Department of Romance Studies at Cornell. At every step of the process Rebecca Davidson, our graduate field assistant, provided invaluable support; her responses to my emails (of which there were many) on everything from administrative deadlines to filing procedures were warm and seemingly calibrated to provide just the perfect amount of detail.

Briefly, I would like to thank the skilled reference librarians at Olin and Kroch libraries at Cornell who helped me to track down rare digital and print materials on Haiti. Many thanks also to my colleague and fellow graduate student, Alex Lenoble, for his encouragement, conversation, and his equally deeply felt appreciation of Haitian literature and culture.

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Few Haitian literary works from the nineteenth century are remembered to this day. Even fewer are read. To be sure there have always been justifications serving to excuse one's divestment from this "minor," "imitative," largely French-language literature from within and without the Caribbean nation. After all, could the writings produced by former slaves of the nascent nation and their descendants possibly ascribe to the status and signifying potential of literature, as we understand it, in the context of French literature? What could the reflections of novelists, playwrights, and poets, writing, often in admiration, of the anticolonial revolution (1791-1804) that severed France's connection to the most lucrative of her sugar colonies and withdrew Haiti from the transatlantic network of human depravity that we benignly call slavery *possibly* hope to teach us about the postcolonial, about the relationship to history of a people "transplanted" to another land, about the kind of narratives that allow such a heterogeneous people to imagine the bonds out of which to form a collectivity? And really do the works of the French Romantic poets such as Victor Hugo's *Bug Jargal* (1826) or Alphonse de Lamartine's *Toussaint Louverture* (1850) not suffice to impart upon us an intuition of the importance of this moment in Atlantic History? I am, of course, being slightly facetious; but, it should not be surprising that if the repeated political troubles of nineteenth century Haiti were used to "demonstrate" the incapacity of self-government by blacks, that, at the height of what we now call scientific racism, the reception of works written by black authors would not be neutral. If the history of Haiti and its revolution have been largely disavowed until recently,

how could the literature of the nation, so interested in this same history not suffer a similar fate?

A suspicion of the nineteenth century Haitian works was not, however, limited to those beyond the Caribbean Sea. As early as 1837 the Haitian journal, *L'union*, began expressing concern over the mechanical and imitative character of *oraisons funèbres* written in the French style[1]. Other commentators, focused less on form, explicitly addressed the diglossic situation of producing a postcolonial Haitian literature *in French*, and worried about the "acquired" or "borrowed," and hence implicitly foreign influence, of their national literature. Time and time again, the solution to diglossia proposed in *L'union* was the production of historical time, the notion that the production of literature, like historical writing, requires a sufficient distance between the "past" and the "present." For one contributor, the contradiction would be resolved when the ever-advancing timepiece of "civilization" would have "naturalized" the French language and rendered it fully compatible with the expressive demands of the Caribbean. For the editor of *L'union*, the true language of Haitian literature had yet to emerge; what was needed, he argued, was a national historical exceptionalism. It is out of this accumulation of shared memories, so potent and unique that Haitians, and only the Haitian collectivity, could see themselves reflected in them, that one day the language with which Haitian literature could be expressed would emerge. In short, explicit theorizations of the status of postcolonial literatures and the relationship that these literatures held with the language of the metropole, led

[1] "Introduction" in Nau, Ignace. *Isalina ou une scène créole*. Port-au-Prince : Editions Choucoune, 2000. pp. 9-16.

early nineteenth century Haitians to the conclusion that time of Haitian literature had not yet arrived.

Nearly forty years later, however, the importance of this relationship between a shared exceptional history and literature that could be recognized as Haitian remained so potent that it helps to account for the near-erasure of several literary works from the period. In 1872 the Haitian political theorist, Demesvar Delorme, published a novel that alternately confounded and disappointed Haitian literary critics. Against the expectation that Haitian novelists seek inspiration from the "realities" of Haitian lived experience, *Francesca: Les jeux du sort*[2] was set in the late fifteenth century (1491-1495), and was focalized through the historically extent Ottoman prince and pretender to the throne, Djem (Zizim), who was then prisoner to Pope Innocent VIII. The Haitian literary historian, Ghislain Gouraige, noting that Delorme was drawn to the political and literary work of French Romantic poet Alphonse de Lamartine, thus reads Delorme's cosmopolitanism and that of the Haitian Romantic authors more generally, as openly disdainful of Haitian themes[3]. This opinion was widespread; it can be found in the writings of influential Haitian critics such as Jean Price-Mars[4] and Duraciné Vaval[5].

Even were we to acknowledge the institutional pressures placed upon Haitian novelistic writing that Jean Jonassaint has outlined in his *Des romans de tradition*

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[2] Delorme, Demesvar. *Francesca : Les jeux du sort.* Paris : E. Dentu, Librarie-Editeur, 1872.
[3] Gouraige, Ghislain. *Histoire de la littérature haïtienne*. Port-au-Prince : Imprimerie N.A. Théodore, 1960. pp. 31, 36.
[4] Price-Mars, Jean. *Ainsi parla l'oncle suivi de revisiter l'oncle*. Montréal, Québec : Editions Mémoire d'Encrier, 2000. p. 205.
[5] Vaval, Duraciné. *Histoire de la littérature haïtienne ou l'« âme noire ».* Port-au-Prince : Imprimerie Aug. A. Heraux, 1933. p. 145.

haïtienne: Sur un récit tragique (2002)[6], and which would account for the continued neglect of novels written before the twentieth century, would we, as literary scholars reading and writing in our present, not have something more to say of Delorme's *Francesca*? Or, to say it in a way that borrows from Laurent Dubreuil's theorization of the time of literature in "What is Literature's Now?"[7]: might *Francesca,* as a definitively "past" text, that simultaneously and immediately responds to the systems of knowledge in our "present", not have something to say in response to recent critical work on the postcolonial, on the Caribbean, on French-language literature of the nineteenth century? It is not enough to play the game of influences and note that the novel is reminiscent of Victor Hugo's dramatic oeuvre, Mme de Staël's reflections on the ruin in *Corinne ou l'Italie* (1807), and even the religious debates spanning Usbek's missives in Montesquieu's *Lettres persanes* (1721). The recognition of intertextuality alone is not a reading. A modern reader interested in this line of interrogation should still demonstrate how *Francesca* responds to our understanding of these texts, perhaps, by showing what happens when Montesquieu's "Persians" are given a historical specificity in the Muslim Prince Djem. What commentaries might yet be produced by analyzing the sediments of historical discourse ("chronicle," "history," "historical fictional prose") out of which Delorme's narrator fashions his narrative?

To reduce the novel to mere cosmopolitan "imitation" is to silence the narrator's attempt to reflect upon (and stage) the moment when Europe—through the printing press, a growing scepticism in the doctrines of the Catholic Church, and the

[6] Jonassaint, Jean. *Des romans de tradition haïtienne : Sur un récit tragique.* Paris : L'Harmattan, 2002.
[7] Dubreuil, Laurent. "What is Literature's Now?" *New Literary History.* 38.1. (Winter, 2007): p. 56. Print.

rise of positivist thinking—entered into the era of "modernity." It is thus a novel that responds directly to recent theorizations of "modernity" and its relationship to the postcolonial such as Dipesh Chakrabarty's *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (2000) and Sibylle Fischer's *Modernity Disavowed: Haiti and the Cultures of Slavery in the Age of Revolution* (2004). As I will show throughout this dissertation, and in particular in Chapter 2, though the cosmopolitan interest in early modern Europe is rather unique and complex, the impulse to enact an analeptic return to the fifteenth century and finding there an inspiration for nineteenth century Haitian advancement, is profoundly *Haitian*.

If I have begun this introduction by sketching the outline for a modern reading of *Francesca* it is in part because the novel serves to demonstrate the powerful national and international silencing mechanisms that have made nineteenth century Haitian literary texts so difficult to access and so easy to dismiss. To cite but one recent example, Sibylle Fischer, whose analysis of the *juridical* fictions of the nineteenth century Haitian constitutions in *Modernity Disavowed* is so intellectually rigorous and rich, nevertheless allows herself to be persuaded by a colorist reading of Haitian literature by Hénock Trouillot she herself admits is Manichean. In doing so the nineteenth century literary tradition (theatre excluded) emerges in her writing as the hegemonic production of the mulatto elite which is contrasted with the non-fictional writings of black intellectuals. This opposition allows her to dispense with all of the nineteenth century Haitian novels in a few paragraphs. And yet *Francesca* tells us something that would likely interest Fischer. It tells us something important about Haitian understandings of time and history. Importantly, by silencing all but the

most inconsequential references which might allude to the discovery of the New World—the novel takes place between 1491 and 1495—the novel implicitly theorizes the difficulty of imagining modernity that would not also include the voyages of 'discovery', the extermination of the Amerindians, and the expansion of Atlantic slavery. Said another way, it performs the disavowal of a certain kind of modernity.

The Pull of the Past

Ah, si l'on pouvait se donner l'illusion de transporter votre temps dans le nôtre, sauf à élaguer quelques erreurs ou quelques rudesses, quel heureux rêve pour une nation qui voudrait vivre dans la quiétude de ses aspirations ethniques.

[Oh ! If only we could give ourselves the illusion *of transporting your time to ours,* with a few errors or severe episodes edited out, what a joyous dream for a nation that would like to live in the quietude of its ethnic aspirations.][8]

As is now clear, this study is concerned primarily with this partially ignored Haitian literature from the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Historically, it spans the period from the Independence of Haiti (1804) and the arrival of the New World's first black postcolonial state, to the end of the little recalled American Occupation of Haiti (1915-1934), or what is sometimes referred to as the "second independence." At times I will refer to this body of works as literature of the "greater nineteenth century." As a strategic label, however, it also requires more clarification than might be suspected by its seemingly apparent and misleading chronological transparency. By it I do not intend to imply that there is any sort of *a priori* unifying principle, aesthetic movement, or telos by which this collection of heterogeneous texts

[8] Leconte, Vergniaud. *Henri Christophe dans l'histoire d'Haïti.* Paris : Editions Berger-Levrault, 1931. p. 448. Emphasis mine. Unless otherwise noted, all translations into English in this dissertation are my own.

referenced by historical contingency could be periodized by the comforting, disciplinary fictions of the literary historian. Perhaps, as Dubreuil seems to suggest in "What is Literature's Now?", it is the case that certain poems or novels will reveal themselves to be, in the moment of analysis, unexpected "contemporaries" of literatures yet to be written or of texts yet undiscovered. However, neither is the label intended to be a total rejection of chronology. It was the literary historian's chronology that condemned many of these works to silence and so, in a reverse movement, it is chronology that will allow them to speak. As I will discuss in more detail below, through the active interpretation of numerous texts I hope to show the uneven formation of methods, vocabularies, and strategies through which Haitian literature thought through the relationship of Haitians to History and to their "predecessors." Furthermore, the chronological endpoints of this study are themselves meaningful. Spanning the period from the central event of Haitian history to its "failed" recurrence, the works of this "period" suggest a shifting understanding of "where" and "when" to locate the origins of Haitian history that complicates the time of Haitian anticolonial postcolonialism.

What interests me most in the study of this corpus is the complex and counterintuitive nature of the unfolding of history as it is constructed through the analysis of these texts. Put simply, the texts of this study suggest that, contrary to our acquired understanding of the flow of historical time, the motion of Haitian history contained within it several distinctive features. For one, this national history was underwritten by an impossible anachronistic return to the time of the (pre-) Columbian Amerindians at the moment of Independence; Haitian historical time depended upon

(and remained bound by) this significant anticolonial contradiction. Furthermore, despite the advances in "calendar time" and through a willed or implicit erasure of the "chronologically recent past," these texts insisted that time of Haiti's "revolutionary past" (1791-1804) was *always* close. Writing during the American Occupation of Haiti, Vergniaud Leconte pushed this position to its logical extreme in the citation that begins this section by wishing for the *complete equivalence* between the time of the present and the time of King Henri Christophe, the early nineteenth century monarch of the Northern Kingdom of Haiti, and thus the *complete erasure* of the Haitian nineteenth century. The title of this dissertation, "The Gravity of Revolution," is an attempt to attest to the pull of the revolutionary past upon the arc of Haitian history. Finally, in the analyses that follow we shall see that the "future" too is complicated. Troubled by the powerful nineteenth century ideological discourses of "progress" and "civilization" that served to justify European colonial expansion and essentialist hierarchies of civilizational attainment, texts of this period displayed an anxiety that while "progress" and "civilization" were not, as their racist critics claimed, incompatible with the black citizens of Haiti, that, due in large part to the practices of the illiterate, extra-capitalist Haitian peasantry, "progress" was consistently being deferred in Haiti. Taken together, the stable proximity of the revolutionary past across time and the endlessly postponed future suggest an overall sense of stasis largely incompatible with "modernity" as it has been elaborated by conceptual historiographer, Reinhart Koselleck in *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing History, Spacing Concepts* (2002).

There is, however, another prong to the work of this dissertation. It is wholly understandable that scholars in Haitian Studies would focus some of their efforts on the study and theorization of the significance (in all senses of the word) of the "Haitian Revolution." As scholars of our time I think it is difficult not to feel a profound sense of appreciation for the localized and symbolic victory of the formerly enslaved over those who would reduce them to chattel. Through their varied intellectual accounts of the Haitian Revolution, diligent scholars have produced novel understandings not only of the relationship of the Haitian Revolution to the other eighteenth century revolutions, the opening of an anticolonial speech in French, the rise of (black) nationalism and the time of the postcolonial, but also the history of philosophy, indeed, the philosophy of history, and accounts of modernity, to name but a few. However, it now appears as if the discipline of Haitian Studies itself remains mostly caught within the "gravity of revolution" and has largely duplicated, in contemporary scholarly work, the privileging of the revolutionary past at the expense of the vastly under-commented nineteenth century.

To be sure, this is beginning to change. Laurent Dubois, whose *Avengers of the New World: The Story of the Haitian Revolution* (2004) is one of the most accessible and highly regarded histories of the revolution of late, recently addressed the post-revolutionary period in his extremely important *Haiti: The Aftershocks of History* (2012), which provides a rare and complex narrative of the political difficulties of the black postcolonial state from the revolution to the earthquake which struck Haiti in 2010. Deborah Jenson's *Beyond the Slave Narrative: Politics, Sex, and Manuscripts in the Haitian Revolution* (2011), while largely caught within the gravity

of revolution, also makes important gestures towards the nineteenth century by analyzing the important innovations of the postcolonial political texts of the Haitian Revolutionary generals. Similarly, Doris Garraway, known for her theorization of race and sexuality in the French Caribbean colonies—*The Libertine Colony: Creolization in the Early French Caribbean* (2005)—will include writing on the early nineteenth century, explicitly anticolonial Haitian theorist, le Baron de Vastey, in the upcoming translated and critical edition of *The Colonial System Unveiled* (2014), edited and translated by Chris Bongie.

Perhaps the grip of the revolutionary past on the field is, as the accumulation of this handful of recent texts suggests, weakening. Still, it remains the case that the figures of the revolutionary past remain the means by which we enter into the nineteenth century; Jenson's high-ranking generals and Bongie's Vastey produced texts that could bear witness to the revolution that they had themselves lived through. That is, the field appears to be converging on a moment where the "chronological recent past" of the revolution—the early postrevolutionary period—overlaps with the Haitian historical tendency to place the revolution, without regard to the calendar year, in its "recent past." In this sense, Laurent Dubreuil's recent work on late nineteenth century Haitian political theorist Demesvar Delorme in the recently translated, *The Empire of Language: Towards a Critique of (Post)colonial Expression* (2013), and in whom he sees the potential for constructing an alternative model for literary criticism and the provisional inaugurator of postcolonial theory, is rather unique. It is still the case, however, that the field is more likely to produce innovative and thought-provoking readings of the reign of early postrevolutionary King Henri Christophe

(1811-1820) than the mid-century Emperor Faustin Soulouque (1849-1859) or analyses of the twentieth century novelist Fernand Hibbert rather than his nineteenth century "counterpart," Ignace Nau.

If, as Dubreuil has said, literature speaks "after" disciplinary thought, showing us the cracks in the instituted systems to which we entrust the production of knowledge, then the second thrust of my dissertation could be read as an attempt to read largely nineteenth century literary texts and then theorizations of the Haitian Revolution and Haitian History, as a response to the multitude of contemporary scholarly work produced on the Haitian Revolution. As we shall see, to the extent that Haitian Studies is an inherently interdisciplinary field, this corpus can offer partial responses and important correctives to several important questions of postcolonial studies, to political theory, to more or less accepted accounts of nationalism, to contemporary debates on the formation and expansion of modernity, and to the postcolonial "afterlife" (and critique) of literary forms familiar to readers of French literature. In one sense it is an attempt to read the erasures of the Haitian literary canon against the gaps in the disciplinary thought of contemporary French and Haitian Studies.

Anticolonialism as Postcolonialism

Up until now I have, by and large, avoided speaking of my argument in terms that are overly specific and opted instead for an overview of its contours. I have, I hope, spoken of the truncations and erasures of Haitian history as they are realized in the reading of literary texts in a way that is comprehensible to the non-specialist

through the use of the expression, “the gravity of revolution.” In this section I will add another layer of specificity to my argument by briefly suggesting why it is that the event of the “Haitian Revolution” came to serve as the metaphor through which all of Haitian history could be understood. I will also address the consequences of continuously casting the “recent past” as the “revolutionary past” for Haitian expressions of postcoloniality throughout the greater nineteenth century and conclude with an overview of the structure of the chapters in this work.

Briefly, *The Gravity of Revolution* argues that more than being the foundational moment of Haitian history, the Haitian Revolution had far-reaching and surprising consequences on the way in which Haitian temporality could be thought and expressed. In a gesture that betrayed its "historical engineering," postcolonial Haitians explicitly sought to erase the trace of contact with European colonial civilizations. Over and against New World nomenclature, in 1804 French "Saint-Domingue" became not New Guinea, New Congo, or New Africa, but ‘Haiti,’ one of the names by which the island had been known to the indigenous Amerindian population at the arrival of Columbus. This attempt by nineteenth century black Haitians to diachronically "repopulate" the land of the Amerindians, long since decimated by the destructive colonial policies of fifteenth century Spain, allowed Haitians to imagine the link and a telos, however tenuous, between the history of the Amerindians and that of the free black citizens of a New World more than amenable to slavery. It also meant, however, that for as unthinkably “modern” as Haiti was, as a nation founded on the principal of racial equality and radical antislavery, it was in some ways *also* an imagined restoration of never quite pre-Columbian times. A crisis

in the unfolding of Haitian time marked the declaration of Independence as Haitians anxiously looked forward to the time of an uncertain postcolonial future *and simultaneously* bore witness to the contiguity of the anticolonial epoch of their Amerindian "predecessors."

The discourses of the final stages of the Haitian Revolution, unlike those that had come before it, had linked radical antislavery to anticolonialism as inseparable aims and this did not end with independence. I argue that because this newly earned postcoloniality was seen as structurally unfinished and precarious, for reasons both theoretical and contingent, that discourses of anticoloniality remained potent long after independence. As the young nation matured and moved further from the moment of its founding, Haitian intellectuals remained bound to pre-existing anticolonial discourses and found it difficult to articulate postcolonial futures without the figurations of this revolutionary anticolonialism. In fact, what we might call the emplotment of Haitian history, taken as a whole, appeared to offer seemingly endless reiterations of the Haitian Revolution. Temporally, Haitian writings indicate that this postcolonial age was experienced as the *distancing* of the ideological categories of "progress" and "civilization" that seemed ever-deferred in Haiti, while the "past" of the revolution seemed to belong, rather counterintuitively, to the "recent past" of all postcolonial Haitians equally. Indeed, it is as if *all* of Haitian history itself, including the history of the demise of the fifteenth century Amerindians, whose incorporation into the national history of modern Haiti is the object of my second chapter, was unthinkable and indecipherable without the familiar script of "1804." That is, this study is a tale of how Haitian history became caught within the "gravity of

revolution," leaving little discursive space for imagining other futures. It is the tale of how Haitian history had figured the anticolonial postcolonialism following "1804" and the anticolonialism of "1492" (in that order), not only as the endpoints of a relatable national history but, in many ways, as impossibly (and yet effectively) *echoes of one another*. And as with the way in which physical gravity warps the space-time around it, so too do we find that this privileging of this one historical moment produces strange truncations, unexpected analepses, partial prolepses and other curious narrative features in the historical reflections of literary texts.

Chapter Overview

The first chapter, "Nothing but a Bark Canoe," performs a sustained close reading of the nearly forgotten 1859 novel, *Stella*, and its controversial retelling of the Haitian Revolution. I begin the chapter by examining the surprisingly limited critical responses (both in number and in content) that have been produced in response to *Stella* despite the fact that it is Haiti's *first* novel. Historically, Haitian critics and literary historians have tended to view the novel as an unintelligible hybrid of fictional, at times, fantastical narration and historico-realist prose undeserving of serious commentary. Nothing could be further from the truth. As I will show through an analysis of the novel's formal temporal effects, the literary form allows author Emeric Bergeaud to stage the distinctive features of Haitian history that I have noted in a way that would be largely difficult for a strict history. That is, the novel, in its frequent, strategic, and purposeful deployment of prolepsis and analepsis, marks the unstated, but nonetheless striking, temporal boundary posts (1492-1804) of what could then be understood as the arc of Haitian history.

In the second section of this chapter, I turn to modern theorists of the concepts by which we speak of historical time, François Hartog and Reinhart Koselleck, in order to speak with greater precision of the historically disordered nature of the narrative intuited in the first section. Drawing upon François Hartog's historical account of the metahistorical notion of the "regime of historicity"—a given epoch's way of articulating the impermanent link between the anthropological, pre-discursive givens of "past," "present," and "future"— I show how *Stella* understood Haitian history according to the regime of the "Historia Magistra Vitae."[9] That is, the seemingly intuitive, but increasingly questioned, belief that the experiences of the past could, indeed should, guide future actions. Reading *Stella* in this way I show how the novel frequently employs the colonial and Greco-roman past to make sense of revolutionary events even as it remains aware of the inability of these pasts to speak to Haiti's novel postcolonial possibilities. Thus, I read the novel's closing, post-Independence coda, which unexpectedly returns the narrative to "1492," not as an isolated failure of the author but rather as a complex temporal structure within Haitian history. What the novel lays bare, I contend, is the temporal crisis that emerged at the moment of the nation's founding, the consequence of forging a nation upon the lines of a fictive Amerindian inheritance.

In the final section of this chapter, I allow *Stella* to speak "after" recent critical work on the formation of nationalism in the New World generally, and the historically inflected narrative presented by Benedict Anderson in *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (1991) in particular. Reading

[9] Hartog, François. *Régimes d'historicité : Présentisme et expériences du temps.* Paris : Editions du Seuil, 2003.

Anderson's description of the emergence of a modular, New World "Creole Nationalism" with an eye to the textual manipulations that emerge when he discusses Haiti and the Haitian Revolution, allows us to show that the Andersonian model cannot easily account for either the pro-slavery, anticolonial nationalism of white Creoles in French Saint-Domingue or the emergence of a black antislavery nationalism in revolutionary Haiti. Instead, I read *Stella* in concert with Aimé Césaire's *Toussaint Louverture : La révolution française et le problème colonial* (1961) and Beaubrun Ardouin's mid-nineteenth century *Etudes sur l'histoire d'Haïti*, and show that the creation and circulation of the Haitian flag was a powerful non-print signifier that was legible as an emblem of radical antislavery and anticolonialism under which Haitians could unite in their opposition to the French.

Further elaborating on the theoretical implications of a fictive, but fiercely imagined, anticolonial Amerindian inheritance, **the second chapter, "Inheriting Haiti,"** focuses on the political, historical, and literary texts that explicitly sought to imagine the life worlds of the island's Amerindian anticolonial predecessors and accommodate their history within the annals of black Haitian history. In this chapter I conceptualize "inheritance," not only in the Derridean sense, which, importantly for the work of this chapter, invites us to reject the notion of pure passivity and recall that an "active" engagement is required to keep an inheritance "in life," but also in the toponymic sense ('Haiti'), by reading Benedict Anderson against the grain. Drawing upon Anderson's insight that in the Americas "new" spaces were to be read as the simultaneous, sibling counterparts to those in the Old World ("New England"), I

conclude that 'Haiti' escapes the logic of simultaneity and finds its analogue in the distant past.

In the first half of the chapter I read three non-fictional texts from throughout the first half of the Haitian nineteenth century with an eye to how they sought to articulate the relationship—the inheritance—between the fifteenth century Amerindians and their nineteenth century "counterparts." My reading of the Dessalinian Proclamation of Independence is thus a crucial starting point in that it shows us that the modern expression of postcolonial anticolonialism was conceived as the imitation of a posited Amerindian anticolonialism. Importantly, one of the functions of the later literature of Amerindian inspiration was precisely to stage the antecedent of anticolonial resistance whose "imitation" Dessalines had called for among modern Haitians. The second text, the Baron de Vastey's *Système colonial dévoilé* (1814) served to circulate an explicitly anticolonial discourse that sought to theorize the shared, transhistorical suffering of the Amerindians and Blacks of Haiti under a common transatlantic system of European colonialism. It is also the first text, to my knowledge, to reach to a logic of historical analogy to make the Amerindian past intelligible in light of the recent past of the Haitian Revolution. That is, Vastey's text provided the theoretical blueprint that allowed others to see how the Amerindian period could be expressed as a "recurrence" of the Haitian Revolution. I conclude my analysis of the non-fictional texts by returning to Sibylle Fischer's recent reading of Emile Nau's now classic, *Histoire des Caciques d'Haïti* (1854) in *Modernity Disavowed* (2004). Rather than read the tale of 'Henri'—so-called "last of the Indian Chieftains"—as an unqualified "failure" of Amerindian resistance, as she does, I note

that what makes the analogy between Henri and Dessalines "fail" isn't the "failure" of Henri's anticolonial tactics, which were relatively successful, but the very temporal position from which he acted. Occupying a time *after* the collapse of Amerindian institutions when resistance could no longer guarantee the departure of the Spanish, Henri already occupied, like the modern Haitians reading about him, a time *after the Amerindians*. The Dessalinian oath to live free of colonial oppression or die could not signify the same thing when the extinction of the Amerindians was already a given.

In the second part of the chapter I turn my attention to the body of Haitian literary works inspired by the historical writings on Haiti's Amerindian period that appeared with increased frequency in the late nineteenth century. In particular, I analyze two dramatic accounts of the Amerindian period; Henri Chauvet's 1894 play, *La fille du Kacik*, and Frédéric Burr-Reynaud and Dominique Hippolyte's American occupation-era, *Anacaona: poème dramatique en vers en trois actes et un tableau* (1927). Insofar as inheritance requires a death, in this final section I read these plays (and Amerindian-inspired literature more generally) in light of Reinhart Koselleck's theorization of monuments to the dead in *L'expérience de l'histoire* (1997). As I hope to show, a theory of the production and failure of signification in monuments to the dead is immanently useful for reading a literature which purports to honor the fallen Amerindians by linking their anticolonial struggles to those of their modern Haitian "survivors." It also useful in helping to show that though these texts imagine the Amerindian inheritance as felicitous, many of the texts struggle to stage the (fictive) moment when the black and brown bodies suffering under the weight of the European Atlantic Colonialism, recognized their mutual suffering and ensured the inheritance of

'Haiti' from a dying race to those who would avenge them. I conclude this chapter by arguing that Chauvet's text, through a determined, willful manipulation of historical time, attempts to short-circuit any recognition of the loss of Amerindian life so as to imply the success of later, nineteenth-century anticolonial efforts on the part of modern Haitians. In contrast, *Anacaona*, returning to the massacre of Amerindian nobility in early sixteenth century Haiti's Xaragua province, visibly mourns their deaths and explicitly disarms the duplicitous poisoned promises of colonization after it has become an established fact.

My third and final chapter, **"The Gravity of Revolution,"** is part of a larger critique in my work on the under-theorization of the notion of "revolution" in some writings within the field of Haitian Studies[10]. Drawing on the elaborations of the concept of "revolution" advanced by Reinhart Koselleck in *Le future passé: Contribution à la sémantique des temps historiques* (1990) and Hannah Arendt in *On Revolution* (1963), I turn my attention to the ways in which the writings of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, honed by reflections on the centennial of Haitian independence (1904) and American occupation (1915-1934), continued to debate the meanings and legacies of the Haitian Revolution. At heart, it is also an investigation into the increasingly recognized failure of the discourses produced by the "gravity of revolution" to account for meaningful and lasting political change in Haiti. In my readings I analyze the ways in which Haitian literary texts of this period sought to recalibrate an understanding of legitimate violence in the political sphere, not as a

[10] See Reyes, Michael. « The World of the Haitian Revolution (Review) ». *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 11.3 (2010): n.pag. Web.

return to the time of the Haitian Revolution, but as an *opening* towards a History outside of the reach of its powerful and limiting analogical pull.

I begin the chapter by reading Frédéric Marcelin's *La vengeance de mama* (1902) in light of the revolutionary intentions of one of its central protagonists, Josilus. What makes his call to revolution notable, however, is precisely his stated refusal to engage with the "revolutions" of the past, by calling instead on Haitians to "bury the past" of the Haitian Revolution once and for all. Importantly for the reading I am proposing in this chapter, Josilus' "revolution" is only made possible through the vengeance plot of Zulma, the eponymous "mama," motivated by the desire to avenge her slain fiancé, the protagonist of the previous *Themistocle Epaminondas-Labasterre* (1901). To ensure the realization of his novel "revolution," Josilus must disavow and forcefully repudiate the revolutionary methods and the phraseology of vengeance that animate Zulma's actions and which have given meaning to "revolution" since the time of Dessalines. Also excluded from the time of his revolution are the Haitian peasants. Reading *La Vengeance de mama* in light of Michel Rolph-Trouillot's *Haiti: State against Nation: The Origins of Duvalierism* (1990) and Nick Nesbitt's *Universal Emancipation: The Haitian Revolution and the Radical Enlightenment* (2008), I show how, if Josilus seeks to create a revolution that will "open" the future for subjects he recognizes as political, he nevertheless seeks to return the peasants to *Louverturian time*, when freedom from slavery was compatible with the unfreedom from plantation labor. I suggest that such a "revolution" might seek to avoid the "gravity of revolution" by rewriting the origin of Haitian time and decoupling anticolonialism from Haitian postcoloniality.

Finally, I end the chapter, and this study, with a reading of two texts that bookend the final period of the American occupation and which allow us to think through the discourses of "1804" and "revolution" in light of the increased valorization of the Haitian peasantry by the Indigenist aesthetic movement: Jean Brierre's *Le drapeau de demain* (1931) and Cléante Valcin's *La blanche négresse* (1934). Read through a poetics of "possession" influenced by Colin Dayan's *Haiti, History and the Gods* (1998) and Laurent Dubreuil's *The Empire of Language* (2013), I show how Brierre's *Drapeau* attempts to encode the precarious nature of Dessalinian postcolonialism into the static emblem of the national flag. However, I argue that the re-enactment is not only seen as an anticolonial failure in its own time, but that it comes at the cost of rerouting Haitian ancestry. No longer imagined as "indigenous" to the Caribbean, as Dessalines had said in his proclamation, *Drapeau* sees Haitians as members of a transplanted race and legatees of an African and not Amerindian inheritance. The failure of re-enactment also animates my reading of *La blanche négresse*. Rather than imagining the 1934 departure of the Americans—"the second independence"— as a joyous moment, the novel suggests, rather troublingly, that because the Americans had left for reasons of political expediency, the chain of anticolonial militarism that had defined Haitian revolutionary action since the Amerindians had not been allowed to reach its logical conclusion of *liberty or death*. At last outside of the gravity of revolution, the unwelcome breakdown of historical analogy in *La blanche négresse* places Haitians in a troubling present without a familiar script for articulating what was to come.

Final thoughts

The literary historian must loosen his grip on the mostly nineteenth century literature that comprises the corpus of this study. Surely it cannot suffice to know the political orientations of an author, the French literary traditions with which Haitian poets identified their own writings, or the plot summaries of those novels which are judged to be aesthetically pleasing to write of Haitian literature. *Readings*, at least in the sense given to them by literary criticism, are more than the co-incidence between historical contingency and textual language; they are unforeseeable, undisciplined, and, if we take seriously the assertion that literature speaks after the other disciplines, necessarily unfinished. Thus, although I am immensely grateful to Jean Jonassaint for cataloguing the features of the "novel in the Haitian tradition," his "meta-study" of the literary historical surveys that have governed Haitian institutional taste over the last century could not help but reproduce and reinforce the excision of the nineteenth century novelistic tradition in our present. Similarly, the ideological valence of a novel or series of novels should not be used *a priori* to arrest a reading before it has even started, as has been the case in some recent critical work. Ideology must be reconstituted in the interpretation of a text. Even were all of the nineteenth century works the product of a rapacious elite—which is a claim that would still require interpretation—would we not still have something to say of the strategies of ideological reproduction, or even the anxieties that these texts laid bare?

In many respects, this study has been conceived as an attempt to *read* and take seriously the literary critique of Haitian works both in the sense of my interpretation of their capacity to signify and in the sense of the capacity of these works to respond to

key findings in the fields of French and Haitian Studies *today*. It is my hope that even those scholars who are not working on this literature will find something important and influential in the writings that follow, something that will perhaps invite them to revisit their own working theories on Caribbean and French language literatures.

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CHAPTER 1
NOTHING BUT A BARK CANOE: *STELLA* AND THE DIFFICULTIES OF NARRATING THE HAITIAN REVOLUTION

Introduction

"Malheureusement, peu connu de la génération actuelle."

["Unfortunately little known by the current generation."]

On April 16, 1848 the presidential guard of Haitian President Faustin Soulouque (1847-1859), aided by the ruler's personal militia, the *Zinglins*, descended into the streets of Port-au-Prince and proceeded to massacre members of the mulatto population. Three entire days of spectacular carnage went by before the President, upon the repeated insistence of the British and French Consulates, finally gave the order to end the violent attacks. Among the prominent victims of the attacks was Céligny Ardouin, brother to the famed mid-century historian, Beaubrun and Coriolan, one of Haiti's first notable romantic poets. For the mulatto political class who had brought Soulouque to power as part of their *understudy policy* in the hopes that he would serve as nothing more than a naïve, politically malleable black figurehead for their own economic and political interests, Soulouque's colorist retaliation likely came as a shock. His subsequent ascension to the title of Emperor Faustin I in August of the following year (1849) only served to highlight the extent to which he had gone off script[11].

It is perhaps surprising to find that this is the political setting in which the very first Haitian novel, *Stella* (1859), published only seven years after the official

[11] My account of the 1848 massacre is taken from Léon-François Hoffmann's fascinating, and surprisingly fair, biography of Soulouque. Hoffmann, Léon-François. *Faustin Soulouque d'Haïti dans l'histoire et la littérature.* Paris : L'harmattan, 2007. See especially pp. 48-51.

coronation of the Emperor (1852), is penned by the political exile, Emeric Bergeaud. Written from the island of Saint-Thomas during the years of imperial persecution against the mulattos[12], Bergeaud's historically-inflected *Stella* recounts not, as one might expect, the political instability of the 1840s that preceded the reign of Faustin I (the fall of Boyer (1843), the Piquet rebellion of the 1840s, the definitive loss of Spanish Santo-Domingo (1844)) or even life in the Empire, but rather the events of Haiti's proud, though definitively-past, revolution (1791-1804).

A brief summary of the plot will no doubt be helpful before proceeding. In *Stella* the Haitian Revolution is first imagined as a personal quest for vengeance by two enslaved half-brothers, Romulus and Rémus, whose mother, Marie the African, was whipped to death on the order of the notorious, Le Colon, after she attempted to intercede on behalf of a field hand. In their attempt to capture and murder Le Colon, the brothers meet a beautiful young woman named Stella, who, unbeknownst to them, is the incarnation of the spirit of liberty. Along their journey, Stella will provide the military and spiritual counsel that will not only enable the brothers to overcome their own differences and avenge their mother, but ultimately to rid the colony of slavery and French rule, thus setting the stage for the establishment of Haiti, the black republic.

Despite the importance that one might reasonably expect *Stella*—as the very first Haitian novel—to have in the field of Haitian literary studies, studies of French-language literatures, or even in the field of Haitian studies more generally (given the tenacious hold of the "Haitian Revolution" in recent critical work), the novel, remains

[12] Gouraige, Ghislain. *Histoire de la littérature haïtienne : De l'indépendance à nos jours.* Port-au-Prince : Imprimerie N. A. Théodore, 1960. P. 29.

woefully under-commented and unexamined. This is not a recent phenomenon. Duraciné Pouilh noted in the journal *Le Ronde* as early as 1901, that is, a mere forty years after the novel's initial publication, that the work was "malheureusement, peu connu de la génération actuelle." [13] ["Unfortunately little known by the current generation."][14]

A quick survey of the critical work done on *Stella* demonstrates to what extent continued and sustained interrogation of this text (and, as we'll see, of other 19th century Haitian novels) is currently lacking. Commentary on *Stella* can be crudely grouped into three categories: a limited number of short, but generally positive, reviews published in late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century Haitian journals; brief, but notably more critical entries in histories of Haitian literature; and, finally, because of the novel's revolutionary setting, a concise analysis in more recent theoretical work on Haiti[15]. In fact, to my knowledge, the most extensive engagement with *Stella* can be found as a chapter in Léon-François Hoffmann's *Essays on Haitian Literature* (1984)—"The First Haitian Novel: Emeric Bergeaud's *Stella*"—later reworked for his 1999 collection of essays, *Haitian Fiction Revisited.* However, even Hoffmann's reading, while sensitive to one of the more theoretically interesting questions of the novel, ultimately finds itself, partly for reasons of historical contingency, partly for reasons of purpose, unable to provide much in-depth analysis. As Hoffmann clearly acknowledges within his opening paragraph, he wrote the essay

[13] Pouilh, Duraciné. "Souvenirs littéraires: Eméric Bergeaud. » *La Ronde.* Port-au-Prince. 15 février 1901. Pp.92-3.
[14] Unless otherwise stated, all translations from French to English are my own.
[15] See especially, Chapter 13 : « Liberty and Reasons of State : Post-Revolutionary Constitutions II » in Fischer, Sibylle. *Modernity Disavowed: Haiti and the Cultures of Slavery in the Age of Revolution.* Durham: Duke University Press, 2004.

at a time when the novel (last published in 1887) had been read by only a handful of specialists[16]. As a result, Hoffmann's text attempts here in its plot summary, there in its thematic overview, to provide an introduction for a text that his readers would likely never have the chance to read. This is clearly no longer the case as digital libraries and even a recent re-edition (2009) have greatly increased the accessibility of the text.

Questions of accessibility alone, however, cannot account for the persistent neglect of the novel among critics of Haitian, so-called postcolonial, or French-language literatures. Another explanation is needed to address how it is that *Stella* came to fall outside of the disciplinary purview of so many literary critics, and why it was that in 1901, the text had already nearly been forgotten.

"Novels in the Haitian Tradition" : Problems of Periodization

A partial answer to the question has recently been offered by Jean Jonaissaint in his work, *Des romans de tradition haïtienne: Sur un récit tragique* (2002). Jonaissaint's principal argument as concerns the periodization of the Haitian novel can be summarized as follows:

> La critique haïtienne, comme il sera démontré notamment à partir d'une lecture des manuels les plus diffusés tant au lycée qu'au premier cycle universitaire (Fardin, Gouraige, Berrou et Pompilus), est unanime, ***le roman ou récit haïtien naît vraiment à partir de 1901*** avec la parution chez Ollendorf, à Paris, de *Thémistocle-Epaminondas Labasterre* de Frédéric Marcelin, sous-titré : *petit récit haïtien.*
>
> [Haitian literary criticism, as will be shown by drawing upon, in particular, a reading of the most widely disseminated textbooks in high school and undergraduate curricula (Fardin, Gouraige, Berrou and Pompilus) is unanimous: ***the Haitian novel or tale [récit] is truly born in 1901*** with the publication by Ollendorf, in Paris, of

[16] Hoffmann, *Haitian Fiction Revisited.* Pueblo, Colo : Passeggiata Press, 1999. p. 213.

Thémistocle-Epaminondas Labasterre by Frédéric Marcelin, bearing the subtitle: *a brief Haitian tale.*]

Yet, by setting the dawn of Haitian literature at « 1901 », the Haitian literary authorities, as Jonassaint immediately acknowledges, either explicitly or implicitly exclude the novels of political and legal authors, Demesvar Delorme (*Francesca*, *Le damné*) and Louis-Joseph Janvier (*Une chercheuse*, *Le vieux piquet*) as well as Amédée Brun's *Deux Amours* and, of course, of primary concern to us: Emeric Bergeaud's *Stella*[17], all of which were published in the latter half of the nineteenth century. In order to account for these persistent, reiterated exclusions, Jonassaint constructs a "micro-genre," what he terms "the novel in the Haitian tradition," that will form the basis of the dominant narratives that will be *legible as uniquely Haitian* from 1901 until 1961. For Jonassaint this is possible because these novels in the Haitian tradition principally share, among other traits: a realist style of narration; a concern with *Haitian* socioeconomic problems; and a common language: Haitianized French which culminate in the production of a text whose discursive elements, analogous to those of an autobiography, enact a pact of *Haitianness* between reader and text[18].

Displacing the birth of the Haitian novel—and the tradition of the written conte that preceded it[19]—in order to achieve a simplicity and formal elegance in the periodization of Haitian narrative literature tells us very little about what to make of the handful of novels that were published prior to the seemingly agreed upon date of

[17] Jonassaint, Jean. *Des romans de tradition haïtienne : Sur un récit tragique.* Paris : L'Harmattan, 2002. P. 59. Emphasis mine.
[18] Jonassaint, p. 60.
[19] See among others the *contes* published by Ignace Nau in the 1830s. Nau, Ignace. *Isalina ou une scène créole.* Port-au-Prince: Editions Choucoune, 2000.

"1901." And this against Jonassaint's own previous work. Elsewhere, in a previous essay, Jonassaint notes the importance of none other than the *19th century* corpus, here disavowed, as a means of rethinking the temporality of Négritude: "the impressive Haitian corpus of the nineteenth century which foreshadowed the forthcoming anticolonialist and anti-imperialist or nationalist francophone discourses of the 1960s has been erased or forgotten" (ed. Garraway, 201)[20].

If Jonassaint cannot find a place for *Stella* within his micro-genre, based on the source criticism he used to base his argument, which, incidentally, has the unfortunate consequence of reproducing the exclusion for a new age[21], it is worth noting that *Stella*'s genre-bending features posed a problem for many literary critics and historians. Berrou and Pompilus note that, "*Stella* est *moins un roman* que *l'histoire romancée* des guerres de l'indépendance » ["*Stella* is *less a novel* than *the novelized history* of the wars of independence."][22]. Similarly, Duraciné Vaval writes in his History of Haitian Literature that *Stella* is a "roman-poème," ["novel-poem"] a self-contradictory text that, by definition, cannot withstand its attempt to relate the historical details of the revolutionary period while retaining its novelistic character.

> A certains moments *l'auteur oublie que c'est un roman ou une fiction qu'il donne* et fait alors tout bonnement de l'Histoire d'Haïti. Voilà que dans *ce soi-disant roman, on trouve une description exacte*, circonstanciée d'un des faits d'armes les plus remarquables de notre guerre d'Indépendance : Vertières. Plus loin ou plus avant, *des faits historiques absolument imaginés*. E. Bergeaud ne pouvait sortir de là : *c'est le*

[20] Jonassaint, Jean. « Towards New Paradigms in Caribbean Studies : The Impact of the Haitian Revolution on Our Literatures." In *Tree of Liberty: Cultural Legacies of the Haitian Revolution in the Atlantic World.* Ed. Doris L. Garraway. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2008.

[21] That is, content with having discovered the rules which govern the order of Haitian literary discourse and which lead to the exclusion of the nineteenth century novels, he does not, indeed cannot, analyze them within his work.

[22] As quoted by Jonassaint, My emphasis, 59.

> *genre même du roman-poème qui eut cette contradiction : le merveilleux, d'un côté, et de l'autre, la réalité historique*[23].
>
> ["At certain points the author forgets that it's a novel or a fiction that he is providing and produces [fait], quite simply, the history of Haiti. And so in *this so-called novel, one finds an exact, detailed description* of one of the most remarkable successes of our war of Independence: the battle of Vertières. Further on or a bit before, *one finds absolutely imagined historical facts.* E. Bergeaud could not figure his way out: *for it's the very genre of the "novel-poem" which bears this contradiction: the marvelous, on one hand, and, on the other, historical reality.*"]

As these two citations make clear, in neither case is *Stella* recognized as simply a novel. Yet this point of agreement should not disguise the crucial difference in their interpretation of Bergeaud's text. In the former, *Stella* is seen as *less than* a novel; its more or less a history that borrows from the conventions of narrative literature. For Vaval, on the other hand, *Stella* by its very nature as a contradictory, composite text—the "roman-poème"—is *more than* a novel. By providing a text in which pure fantasy ("le merveilleux") that cannot be taken as a representation for events *as they really were*, is superposed onto historical reality ("une description exacte") that cannot be part of the invented world of fiction, Vaval's Bergeaud writes himself into narrative dead-end. Explicit, then, in both of these critiques is the notion that, because of its discursive contiguity with the practices of *historical writing*, *Stella* cannot easily be classified as a "novel." As we shall see in the section to follow, Bergeaud was sufficiently concerned with the genre classification that his text would receive that he penned a prefatory "Avertissement" to address how he perceived his text was articulating the relationship between history and fiction.

More recent critics have suggested, however, that it is not so much *Stella*'s <u>*genre*</u> that prolongs the literary exile of Bergeaud and, by implication, the other

[23] Vaval, Duraciné. *Histoire de la littérature haïtienne ou l'âme noire.* Port-au-Prince : Imprimerie Aug. A. Heraux, 1933. P. 142. My emphasis.

neglected nineteenth-century authors from the novelistic canon, but rather their initial date of publication. Put another way, these works are *anachronistic* relative to their place in the development of the national canon and gain an increased signification if they are considered in light of much later developments in Haitian literature. Dieudonné Fardin writes in his *Cours d'histoire de la littérature haïtienne* (1969):

> *Ces romanciers sont en avance sur leur temps*. Ils ont une vision trop engagée du monde. *Il faut attendre la seconde moitié du vingtième siècle pour les comprendre et les apprécier*. *Stella* d'Emeric Bergeaud est *l'ancêtre* du réalisme merveilleux rêvé par Jacques Stéphen Alexis ; les romans de Delorme et de Janvier s'inscrivent dans *la lignée* de la littérature haïtienne contemporaine qui ne se veut plus insulaire, mais universelle. Les romans psychologiques de Brun annoncent Jacques Roumain, Anthony Lespès et Edris St-Amant (Fardin, 1969 :8)[24]
>
> [« *These novelists are ahead of their time.* They have a vision of the world that is too politically committed [engagée]. *One has to wait for the second half of the twentieth century to understand and appreciate them.* Emeric Bergeaud's *Stella* is the *ancestor* of the marvelous realism dreamed of by Jacques Stéphen Alexis; the novels of Delorme and Janvier can be inscribed within the tradition of a contemporary Haitian literature that no longer seeks to be insular, but rather universal. The psychological novels of Brun prefigure Jacques Roumain, Anthony Lespès and Edris St-Amant" (Fardin, 1969:8).]

If Fardin's reading of the neglected nineteenth-century authors seems excessively reparative—finding, it would seem, a corresponding contemporary tradition for each author—it nevertheless clearly seeks to address the nagging scar left behind by the excision of these texts. It is precisely by stressing their anachronistic character (*Ces romanciers sont en avance sur leur temps*), [*These novelists are ahead of their time*], that Fardin is able to re-inscribe these novelists into a meaningful genealogy (*ancêtre* [ancestor], *lignée* [tradition]) and elevate their work to the level of something other than *exotic, not-truly-Haitian* outliers.[25] Furthermore, and though not

[24] My emphasis. As quoted in Jonassaint, p. 65.

[25] This is, at least in the case of *Stella*, the opinion of Martin Munro. "The first Haitian novel, Eméric Bergeaud's *Stella*, was not published until 1859, and if this work looked back to the wars and promoted unity between blacks and mulattoes, it also introduced, through the story of the African Marie, the themes of wandering and escape that have characterized much Haitian fiction, *particularly in the late*

immediately evident, Fardin's periodization appears as the quasi-inverse image of Jonassaint's "novels in the Haitian tradition." That is, from the temporal suturing that Fardin is carrying out in bringing the nineteenth century closer to the late 1950s[26], what gets lost in the temporal pocket is nearly precisely the "novel in the Haitian tradition" which, as a genre, is only purported to exist from 1901 until 1961. In other words, from of our brief overview of the existing critical literature it would appear that Haitian novels belong to two, only partially overlapping temporalities: the discontinuous but open [(1859-1895) + (1950→)] and the continuous but seemingly exhausted (1901-1961).

From Stella's history to* Stella *on history

If I have spent so much time cataloguing the existing scholarship on *Stella*—and there is little to work with—it is because I want to convey the extent to which most criticism, mired in conversations about the status of the text has little to say about the novel's most interesting, and widely ignored, features. Furthermore, in pointing to the periodization operating at the level of institutionalized literary history, I wanted to offer a partial explanation for why it is that this text here is, short of an error on my part, no doubt the longest sustained reflection on *Stella* that has ever been published. This is a shame and for two reasons. On the one hand it is unfortunate that few scholars have deemed this novel, *Haiti's first,* worthy of critical engagement. While it could be argued that historical contingency does not equal literary merit,

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twentieth century".
Munro, Martin. "Haitian Novels and Novels of Haiti: History, Haitian Writing and Madison Smartt Bell's Trilogy." *Small Axe, Number 23.* 11.2. (June 2007): 164.

[26] An approximation based on the publication dates for the cited authors.

given the enduring historical bent in the field of Haitian Studies[27] and *Stella*'s continued explicit and literary reflections on the nature and limitations of historical discourse, it is all the more tragic that the text has not contributed to contemporary debates for which it so well suited.

My reading of *Stella* begins with this last point, that is, with an interrogation of the explicit distinctions that Bergeaud makes in his text—both in the previously mentioned prefatory note, and in the course of the narrative—about the distinction between *history* and *novels.* The reflections in this first section draw in part upon the work done by Laurent Dubreuil on the responses offered by literary texts to the self-affirming, and partially self-effacing discourse of history. In *L'état critique de la littérature* (2009), Dubreuil argues for an understanding of time as *la variance de l'invariant* (22), an intended and significant contradiction which he takes as one of history's experiential conditions of possibility[28]. Furthermore, here as elsewhere, Dubreuil posits that the language of a literary text not only disrupts the historian's overly simplistic chronology by placing the reader in different times *simultaneously*, but that this "co-presence" of temporality, more than being significant is a defining, if not exclusive, feature of literature (92). "Co-presence" is here understood to be the simultaneous past and present of a literary text that, without being limited to it, becomes active in the process of being read. The theory is elucidated through a reading of Baudelaire's "Le Cygne" in which Dubreuil argues that the poem, through the accumulation of canonical authors both explicit (Ovid, Hugo) and implicit in

[27] The title given to the Haitian Studies Association's annual conference in 2011 was "Haiti at the Intersection of the Caribbean: Tracing the Past, Mapping the Future."
[28] Dubreuil, Laurent. *L'état critique de la littérature.* Paris : Hermann Editeurs, 2009.

language and style (Virgil, Racine), the text inaugurates a pantheonizing "literary history" which simultaneously depends upon and confounds chronology to produce meaning.

Equally important to Dubreuil's understanding of the *variation of the unchanging* is the way in which "Le Cygne" mobilizes and reroutes the emerging discourse of melancholia over the loss of a *vieux Paris* which is no more. Dubreuil argues that Baudelaire's reference to old Paris isn't meant as one more repetition of a discourse that was now, perhaps surprisingly, decades old, but rather, as a dehistoricizing response to it (100). For after all, what did it mean that the same phrase that gave voice to the loss of vestiges of a Paris from the Middle Ages in the 1830s also spoke to the changing Paris of the 1860s? Dubreuil thus alleges that we are witnessing a commentary on history, made possible by *la variance de l'invariant* in which traditional chronology is disrupted by the fact that "le nouveau dépassé peut encore passer pour neuf, et que l'ancien d'hier est parfois aussi vieux que celui d'autrefois" ["Outdated newness can still pass for new, and that yesterday's oldness can sometimes be as old as that of the olden days"] (100-1).

Dubreuil's ideas have been fruitful to my thinking; in the readings of *Stella* to follow, I will find it useful to point to the ways in which Bergeaud constructs a troubled chronology in the mobilization of the "invariable" characters of "Romulus," "Rémus" and "Déborah" in his attempt to give new meaning to the history of Haiti via a history of Rome whose repetitions are at once pronounced and disavowed. Similarly, the notion of the variability of the invariable is an inherently useful place to begin thinking through a dissertation when the aim is precisely to understand both the

"relatively stable proximity" of past-oriented discourses on the Haitian Revolution—that is, an understanding of history in which the revolution seems, at times, to belong to a past more recent than the recent past—and the future, equally distant with each passing year. (Certainly, by the end of the nineteenth century, Haitian texts converge on these points).

All of that being said, it is nevertheless important to point out that my method differs importantly from that of Dubreuil; whereas for Dubreuil the temporal realization of a literary work occurs at the level of language and the way in which that language plays out in distinctive yet simultaneous temporalities (*imitation, "vieux Paris"*), many of my readings attempt to intuit disorders in chronology from a narratological perspective, searching instead for spectacular breaks in narrative time (*analepsis, prolepsis*) or moments of particular "historical density". This is not to say that my approach is "outside of language"—the second chapter's investigation of the trace of "aya bombé" is much more in this style—but rather that while Dubreuil seeks to find the co-presence in the conflicting and yet significant strata in an expression activated through the reader, I have also tended to look more at these temporal gaps "horizontally," across expressions, generating chronological difficulties and inconstancies in the process of a text's being read.

In the second section I will read *Stella* in light of the recent work that has been done in the field of conceptual historiography by theorists Reinhart Koselleck and François Hartog and attempt to reconstruct the *régime d'historicité* that seems to organize Bergeaud's narrator's apprehension of history by examining the ways in which the temporal categories of "past," "present," and "future" come to be

articulated. In the third and final section of this chapter, I will return to the idea of *Stella*'s place in the literary canon as "foundational fiction," and read *Stella* through one of Bergeaud's contemporaries, friends, and one of the first Haitian historians, Beaubrun Ardouin. In so doing, I hope to show that Haitian nationalism as reconstructed through Bergeaud and Ardouin cannot easily be described by either Doris Sommer's notion of the *foundational fiction* or Benedict Anderson's chronology of the development of the concept of *nationalism*.

I - Des faits historiques absolument imaginés : The Status of the Historical in Stella

« Il fallait que la vérité s'y trouvât »

> Stella *has no Foreword, no Preface or Introduction. This is a pity; it would have been interesting to know what Bergeaud's purpose was, why he chose this particular form and structure, and what models inspired him. Be that as it may, the question arises: is* Stella *really a novel and, if so, is it a historical novel?*[29]

What is interesting about Hoffmann's comment is not so much that he was drawn into the question that captivated much of the previous criticism, but rather that his commendable, though, as we stated, ultimately limited analysis, did not appear to have had access to either of the prefatory remarks that are available to both editions of the text that I have read. In addition to an "Avertissement" written by Bergeaud himself, the narrative is preceded by a paratextual remark—"Au lecteur" ["To the Reader"]—from *Stella*'s first editor, Beaubrun Ardouin, historian and biographer of Bergeaud's uncle, the revolutionary general, J.M. Borgella. Ardouin, we learn from this brief note, was entrusted with Bergeaud's manuscript after it became clear that Bergeaud might not recover from an illness he had contracted in 1857, and promised

[29] Hoffmann, Léon François. *Haitian Fiction Revisited.* Pueblo, Colo : Passeggiata Press, 1999. p. 215.

him that he would undertake its publication when the time seemed right[30]. So while Hoffmann, in his search for models that might have inspired Bergeaud, looks to French playwright Alfred de Vigny[31], he might, as I will later demonstrate, have done well to begin with Ardouin's *Etudes sur l'histoire d'Haïti* [*Studies on the History of Haiti*]. At any rate, Hoffmann did not have access to this part of the text and unlike us, is left to reconstruct what Bergeaud's intentions might have been.

"Plusieurs années d'un travail souvent interrompu nous ont conduits à la fin d'une œuvre, » [« It is only after several years of oft-interrupted labor that we have been led to the completion of a work »] , begins Bergeaud's Avertissement, « dont l'imagination a fait les principaux frais et où *nous avons essayé de mettre en relief quelques-uns des plus beaux traits de notre histoire nationale*"[32] ["sponsored by the imagination and wherein we have tried to highlight a few of the most beautiful features of our national history."] Bergeaud establishes from the opening paragraph that his work's purpose will be partially historical; it will attempt to bring to light the most striking features of Haitian history. But rather than simply being an isolated use of the register of aesthetics ("plus beaux traits") ["most beautiful traits"], Bergeaud will continue to draw from this semantic category in order to explain the relationship he sees in his own text between its fictive and historical elements.

> En entourant ces faits *des ornements de la fiction*, notre intention a été de *n'y rien ajouter* : *ce qui est beau n'a pas besoin d'être embelli* ; nous avons voulu simplement *captiver* par *l'attrait* du roman, les esprits qui ne sauraient *s'astreindre à l'étude approfondie* de nos annales.[33]

[30] Bergeaud, Emeric. *Stella*. Carouge-Genève : Editions Zoé et Les Classiques du Monde, 2009. p. 21
[31] Hoffmann, *Haitian Fiction Revisited*, p.217.
[32] Bergeaud, P. 19. My emphasis.
[33] Bergeaud, P. 19. My emphasis.

> ["By surrounding these facts with *the ornaments of fiction*, our intention has been *to add nothing*: what is beautiful has no need to be embellished; we simply wanted to *captivate* via the *attraction* of the novel, those minds which would not know how to entertain the idea of an in-depth study of our annals for themselves."]

Fiction, and one of the cultural artifacts by which it gets circulated—the novel—then, are placed here in a rather curious and precarious position. By Bergeaud's own admission the finest traits of Haitian history are already beautiful and what is beautiful has no need to be further embellished. In other words, for Bergeaud the relationship between the literary and the historical is starting to take on the logic of supplementary excess. Fiction is the supplementary gloss—mere *ornements*—on the historical text that is strictly speaking *unnecessary*, but yet, as he himself admits, it is absolutely *essential* to the felicitous seduction (*captiver, l'attrait*) of readers and the actualization of the historical facts contained within his text.

Nevertheless, even from this brief excerpt it is relatively clear that Bergeaud would like to contain the potential for discursive contamination he himself has introduced by allowing the textual superposition of the literary with the historical. For, unlike historical texts, which he takes to be self-evidently *useful* texts, Bergeaud suggests that literary texts risk being *useless* and this is what he has taken great lengths to avoid in crafting *Stella.*

> Un roman, sans avoir la gravité sévère de l'histoire *peut être un livre utile* […] Toutefois, ce livre pour *produire quelque bien, ne devait avoir du roman que la forme*. Il fallait que la vérité s'y trouvât ; voilà pourquoi nous avons pris soin de ne point défigurer l'histoire.[34]
>
> ["Without having the serious gravity of history, a novel *can be a useful book* […]. That said, in order *to produce some good*, this book *should have had only the form of a novel*. It was important that the truth be found within it; that is why we have taken such great care to not disfigure history."]

[34] Bergeaud, p. 19. My emphasis.

Bergeaud reassures us here not only that (some) novels too can be useful/productive texts, but that he has given *Stella* only the formal mechanisms of a novel; the remainder, its vast truthful and historical content has been left unblemished, neither horribly disfigured nor mutilated ("ne point défigurer"). Fiction finds its utility and justification in providing only the platform for the spread of historical truth.

Thinking back to the brief commentaries that we examined in our introduction on *Stella* and the classificatory difficulties that certain critics have had in light of what we have just seen in this "Avertissement," we might, at this point, be more willing to take the side of Berrou and Pompilous that *Stella* appears to be "moins un roman que l'histoire romancée." ["less a novel than a novelized history"].[35] That seems to be, at least, the stated wish of Bergeaud himself. However, we might then want to ask ourselves why an author would preface a novel such as *Stella* with a warning and, in particular, a warning vaunting the successful containment of fiction and its demotion to a mere servant of historical discourse that may not interest readers unaccustomed to scholarly engagement ("à l'étude approfondie"). The answer, I believe, lies in the contrast between the first half of the Avertissement, with its claims of historical purity, and the preface's concluding remarks which should take any attentive reader completely by surprise.

> La révolution de Saint-Domingue, laborieux enfantement d'une société nouvelle, a donné naissance à quatre hommes qui en personnifient les excès et la gloire: *RIGAUD, TOUSSAINT, DESSALINES, PETION.*
>
> *Nous avons emprunté à la vie de ces hommes les détails dont nous avions besoin* pour compléter celle des deux frères qui, à proprement parler, n'ont point d'individualité.

[35] What interests me here is the change operated by the adjectival "romancée". Since all history is inherently dependent on techniques of narration, despite the evacuation of a narrator, Pompilous's "histoire romancée" comes across as pleonasm parading as a third synthetic category in which the tension between history and literature would be resolved.

> *Romulus, Rémus et le Colon, sont des êtres collectifs, l'Africaine est une idéalité, Stella est une abstraction*.[36]
>
> ["The revolution that took place in Saint-Domingue, laborious delivery of a new society that it was, gave birth to four men who personify its excesses and its glory: *RIGAUD, TOUSSAINT, DESSALINES, PETION*.
>
> *We have borrowed from the lives of these men those details which we needed* to supplement the lives of the two brothers who, strictly speaking, have no individuality. *Romulus, Rémus, and the Colonist are collective beings, the African Woman is an ideality; Stella is an abstraction*."]

Of most immediate concern for us here is the radical operation that is performed in these three paragraphs. In the first, Bergeaud evokes properly historical actors of the Haitian Revolution and figures generally counted among the founding fathers of the country[37]: the mulatto military leader, André Rigaud; the black general that would eventually come to be the governor of the colony, Toussaint Louverture; the black general and eventual first Haitian head of State, Jean-Jacques Dessalines; and, Alexandre Pétion, a mulatto leader of the revolution and, following Dessalines' assassination, the subsequent Haitian head of State. Yet, despite the importance explicitly conferred by this paragraph and the block capital letters suggesting that *Stella* will be a history of *these* great men, this is the *last time* that these names appear in *Stella*, which is to say that they never appear in the course of the narrative itself! In this way, the second paragraph which tells us of the inspiration that the author was able to draw from the lives of the founding fathers functions as a performative, accomplishing its act by the last of the paragraphs I have cited above. The final list of fictional characters either as composite characters, idealities, or abstractions thus become the felicitous output of the given historical input. Already then, the text, which

[36] Bergeaud, p. 19-20. My emphasis.
[37] Henri Christophe appears conspicuously absent from this short list.

sought to distinguish itself as a work of historical prose, whose internal purity was safeguarded by the mere ornamentation of fiction, is shown to be worked not only *over* but *through* by its fictitious elements. The effacement and concatenation of four historical actors who will, as we said, remain unnamed in their own narrated historical time, the adoption of "Romulus" and "Rémus" to serve as composite place holders which, must we say it, are important historical actors in their own mythic time, all serve to complicate the order of time related in the novel and Bergeaud's claim that: *il fallait que la vérité s'y trouvât* [*it was important that the truth be found within it*].

In light of the explicit historical transformations announced in this preface, we, as readers, are left wondering: if this text was intended to be a *work* of historical *reproduction* as suggested by the dominant semantic field of the Avertissement (*oeuvre, livre utile, enterprise, occupé, pour produire quelque bien, laborieux, enfantement, donné naissance*), to what kind of knowledge does it give birth? What are we to take with us? What is the pragmatic *utility* of a history that does not relate historical actors in the way that we have come to expect of historical discourse? In other words, what kind of *histoire* of the Haitian Revolution is *Stella* if it does not make mention of the name "Toussaint Louverture," a name so associated with the revolution that almost exactly a century after *Stella*'s publication Aimé Césaire could use Toussaint as a signifier for the Revolution as a whole[38]. However it is essential to stress that this nominal effacement and reconfiguration does not only occur at the level

[38] Césaire, Aimé. *Toussaint Louverture : La révolution française et le problème colonial.* Paris : Présence africaine. 1961. My point here is not to say that the historical and theoretical mobilization of the figure of Toussaint is historically fixed; it too varies in time. But rather, that even were one to view Toussaint's role in the events of the Haitian Revolution in an extremely critical way, as Beaubrun Ardouin does, this central historical actor is generally not absent.

of the founding fathers, *Stella*, with only a few noteworthy exceptions, provides neither chronological markers, nor proper-names, nor locations of historical import, and thus produces a truly perplexing history. The following excerpt from the body of the text should suffice to demonstrate the effect:

> L'armée se divisait ainsi : avant-garde, appuyée d'une cavalerie qui serait opposée au besoin à la cavalerie ennemie obéissait à un général [59] d'une valeur éprouvée ; les principaux corps d'attaque étaient dirigés par deux généraux [60] également braves ; un intrépide général [61] conduisit l'arrière-garde ; un autre [62] qui avait reçu à juste titre le surnom de Vaillant commandait la réserve.[39]
>
> ["The army was divided as follows: the front-line, supported by a cavalry which would face off against an opposing cavalry as needed and which obeyed the orders of a general [59] whose worth had been affirmed; the principal strike corps were lead by two equally brave generals [60]; an intrepid general [61] led the rearguard; another [62], which had rightly received the nickname Valiant, commanded the reserve."]

As certain readers might have anticipated the numbered brackets in the quote, which were presented as superscripts in the original text, do indeed refer to endnotes. Hoffmann has remarked that thirty-six of the text's forty-eight endnotes simply provide the names of locations or individuals[40] and suggested that these proper names might have been withheld from the text in order to facilitate the French reader who would be unable to tell "Saint-Marc" from "Jérémie" or "Le general Maurepas," from "Le general Capois." That may be true—Bergeaud might have had a French audience partially in mind when he made this choice—but this does little to address the question of what kind of *histoire* gets actualized in the reading of *Stella* and only adds the additional question of *how* to read *Stella*.

"Le lac menteur"

[39] Berdeaud, pp. 221-2.
[40] Hoffmann, *Haitian Fiction Revisited*. P. 226.

Given the distinctions made by Bergeaud in the prefatory, paratextual Avertissement it might surprise certain readers that Bergeaud's *narrator* continues to explicitly reflect on the epistemological limits of historical and literary discourse throughout the novel in the course of his retelling of the Haitian Revolution. In an effort to address the question of *Stella*'s genre, few commentaries have neglected to highlight the opening lines of the text's third chapter[41], "Romulus et Rémus," to which I now turn.

> *L'histoire est un fleuve de vérité* qui poursuit son cours majestueux à travers les âges. *Le Roman est un lac menteur* dont l'étendue *se dissimule sous terre* ; calme et pur à sa surface, il *cache* quelquefois dans *ses profondeurs le secret* de la destinée des peuples, des cités, comme le lac Asphaltite.[42]
>
> [*History is a river of truth* which continues its majestic course throughout the ages. *The novel is a disingenuous lake* whose extent is *concealed underground*; calm and pure at its surface, it sometimes hides in *its depths the secret* of the destiny of peoples, of cities, as in the case of the Dead Sea.]

Intuitively, the hydrological terms with which the narrator has ontologized these opposed discursive forms seems apt; a river, even at low velocities, suggests motion, the ever-changing, the impossibility of going upstream, and, at more hurried speeds, the violence of whitewater crashes. In short, a fitting image to represent *history* and the passage of time. Yet, the conceptualization of history that the narrator encodes in the potable emblem of the river, that image that seems so well-suited to us, to him, is itself, as François Hartog has convincingly demonstrated in his analysis of the experiences of time expressed in the travel writings of François-René de Chateaubriand, deeply historical; it belongs to a particular period in history. Discussing, and later quoting the work of Chateaubriand in his attempt to make sense

[41] See Chevry, Aurèle. « *Stella*, par Eméric Bergeaud ». *Haïti littéraire et sociale.* Port-au-Prince : F. Marcelin, juin 1905. P. 233 *and* Hoffmann, *Haitian Fiction Revisited*. P. 215.
[42] Bergeaud, p. 36. My emphasis.

of the French Revolution, Hartog states: « Le temps est, déjà, fleuve : de l'*Essai* à la conclusion des *Mémoires, les reprises et les variations sur ce thème ne manqueront pas.* **« Chaque âge est un fleuve, qui nous entraîne selon le penchant des destinées quand nous nous y abandonnons» ».**[43] ["Time is already a river: from the *Essai* to the conclusion of the *Mémoires*, reworkings and variations of this theme are not lacking. 'Every age is a river which carries us off according to the penchant of the destinies when we give in to them.'"]

In what appears to be a nearly term-by-term contrast of the image of the river of history stands Bergeaud's description of the novel as disingenuous lake. Choosing to remain within the realm of the hydrological, Bergeaud's image of a lake conjures the idea of stillness and serenity (*calme et pur à sa surface*) [*calm and pure at its surface*], that when juxtaposed with that of the river cannot but evoke temporal stasis. Furthermore, whereas the river of history was explicitly conjoined to the ideal of veracity (*fleuve de vérité*) [*river of truth*], the novel is repeatedly associated with a propensity to deceive through falsehoods or concealment (*menteur*, *dissimule*, *cache*, *secret*) [*liar, conceals, hides, secret*]. In fact, in this way, the calmness and purity of its surface then become another form of concealment, because what matters for the lake is not the false quietude of its wrinkleless face, but the secrets it has the potential to veil in its depths. And yet it is precisely these secrets that prevent us, I believe, from forming a strict axiological opposition between the historical river of truth and the novelistic lake of concealment; below sea-level, Bergeaud's narrator suggests,

[43] Hartog, François. *Régimes d'historicité : Présentisme et expériences du temps.* Paris : Editions du Seuil, 2003. Pp. 91-2. My emphasis.

literary discourse foresees certain truths unknown to history's superficial rush through time.

This is not, however, the last word that Bergeaud's narrator will utter on the subject of their epistemological differences; in the paragraph that immediately follows the one cited above he will reflect on the writing subject capable of producing work within these traditions.

> L'histoire, *écho sonore* des *ouragans humains*, en *reproduit fidèlement* les bruits et les fureurs. Pour affronter ces *tempêtes* et conduire à bon port nos héros sauvages, il faudrait autre chose qu'un frêle canot d'écorce ; et d'ailleurs, *sauvages nous-mêmes, nous n'avons ni carte, ni boussole, ni connaissances nautiques. A vous donc, l'orageuse mer, pilote expérimenté, à nous le lac tranquille* ; en nous abandonnant au souffle de Dieu, peut-être arriverons-nous au terme de notre course, guidé par l'étoile de la patrie ![44]
>
> ["History, *the resounding echo of human hurricanes*, *faithfully reproduces* their sounds and their furies. In order to confront these *tempests* and to lead our savage heroes to safe harbor, what is needed is something other than a frail bark canoe; and, furthermore, *being ourselves savages, we have neither map, nor compass, nor nautical knowledge*. *We leave the stormy sea to you, then, experienced captain, for us, the tranquil lake*; in giving ourselves over to the breath of God, perhaps we shall arrive at the end of our journey, guided by the star of the fatherland!"]

In a metonymic displacement of the metaphors from the previous paragraph, History is recast here not as the swirling, violent waters of the hurricanes themselves, but as *their perfect echo*, an image of aural fidelity that implicitly acknowledges the production of truthful discourse within the discipline, *Wie es eigentlich gewesen war.* To write historically, then,—*pour affronter ces tempêtes* [*to confront these tempests*]—Bergeaud's narrator suggests, requires a unique vessel, technique and science, here likened to maritime navigation.

However, in establishing this standard for historical writing, he self-consciously and repeatedly marks himself as incompatible with the kind of subject who could write

[44] Bergeaud, p. 36.

(a) disciplinary history. Thus he notes not only the discrepancy between his method of transport—the frail bark canoe of literary discourse—and the sheer aquatic violence of human events, but an accumulated ignorance of the tools necessary for basic navigational success. "Sauvages nous-mêmes, nous n'avons ni carte, ni boussole, ni connaissances nautiques » ["being ourselves savages, we have neither map, nor compass, nor nautical knowledge"] (Bergeaud, 36). In both cases, the failure of the narrator to produce historiography arises from his partial identification with the long-exterminated Amerindian autochthonous populations that once lived in Haiti. This is suggested both by the reference to the bark canoe—preferred method of transparent within the Caribbean for the Pre-Colombian populations—but also by the label, "sauvages" he adopts[45].

In the end, the narrator will abandon the idea of sailing the stormy seas and leave the task to the non-indigenous writing subject (*le pilot expérimenté*) [(*the experienced captain*)] capable of using the tools of historiography to lead the revolutionary heroes to safe harbor. With nothing but the breath of God in his sails and crude navigation by the light of Star of the Nation, Bergeaud's narrator leaves for the tranquil surface of the lying lake hoping to arrive (*peut-être*) [(*perhaps*)] at the end of his narrative.

Chateaubriand, suggests, however, that historical writing—especially concerning periods of Revolution—may ultimately not fare any better than Bergeaud's storm-battered "sauvage."

[45] Admittedly the term « sauvage, » is a rather ambiguous one in this text. For the inhabitants of Saint-Domingue (both black and of color) who fought against the French, Bergeaud reserves the Dessalinian term, "Indigènes." In the final chapter, when Bergeaud explicitly addresses the autochthonous population present in Haiti when Columbus arrived, he prefers the label, "Indiens." "Sauvage," I would argue, and we shall see in more detail to follow, allows the slippage from one (Indigène) to the other (Indien).

> Les événements couraient plus vite que ma plume : il survenait une révolution qui mettait toutes mes comparaisons en défaut : j'écrivais sur un vaisseau pendant une tempête, et je prétendais peindre comme des objets fixes, les rives fugitives qui passaient et s'abîmaient le long du bord ![46]
>
> ["Events were going by faster than my pen: a revolution had arisen that pointed out the imperfections in my comparisons: I was writing on ship during a storm, and I claimed to paint, as fixed objects, the fugitive banks that passed by and which were ruined all throughout the length of the bank."]

Romulus and Rémus

Following this description of the disciplinary boundaries that would divide the duplicitous lake of the novel from the truthful river of history, the narrator finally introduces the chapter's eponymous heroes, and central characters of the novel, Romulus and Rémus.

> Les fils de l'Africaine, que nous introduisons dans ce chapitre sous les noms de Romulus et Rémus, *moins avec la pensée d'établir une analogie quelconque entre eux et ces jumeaux de l'histoire que parce qu'ils étaient frères*, n'avaient au physique nulle marque de distinction, nul signe révélateur de leur grandeur future.[47]
>
> ["The African woman's sons, which we introduce in this chapter by the names of Romulus and Remus, *less with the idea of establishing any analogy whatsoever between them and those twins of history than because they were brothers*, bore no physical mark of distinction, no revelatory sign of their future grandeur."]

Embedded in the paragraph's entirely excisable clause lies one of its most interesting claims. Obviously, we are not obligated to take narrators at their word, especially not after the narrator's self-professed understanding of the workings of the novel; yet, there is something seemingly amiss, something rather excessive about the narrator's explicit attempt to hollow out the mythico-historical content of the proper names he, himself, has evoked and thus short-circuit *any analogy whatsoever* between his characters and the mythic founding brothers of Rome. Even the most credulous and gullible readers, however, may have difficulty believing that these names were

[46] Chateaubriand as quoted in Hartog, p. 92.
[47] Bergeaud, p. 36. My emphasis.

simply selected, as the narrator states, by the sheer force of convenience, seeking to evoke brothers, *any* brothers.

In his reading of *Stella* Hoffmann rightly points out that Bergeaud's fraternal pair shares more than a passing similarity to the historical and mythological counterparts to which they owe their names. "The names Romulus and Remus seem very fitting; true, our heroes are not twins, and were not even sired by the same father, but this biological detail is secondary. Like the sons of the She-Wolf, they also create a nation, and their fratricidal struggle precedes the founding of Haiti, just as the fratricide of their ancient namesakes preceded that of Rome" (Hoffmann, 220). Hoffmann is right to insist on the many, perhaps surprising, points of narrative contact between the mythical twins and the brothers in *Stella*, however, I would like to suggest that we read them in light of Dubreuil's notion of the variability of the invariable. To do so would allow "Rémus" and "Romulus" to simultaneously signify both the mythic founders of Rome and the sons of Marie the African, encoding contradictory temporalities that nonetheless produce a meaning (*foundational figures)* in the event of the text. Such an approach would have the advantage of producing meaning from the uncomfortable temporal superposition rather than disregarding contradictions as meaningless. Thus, inconsistencies, such as Hoffmann's claim that the biological differences between the ancient and modern brothers is "secondary," actually turn out to be critical, because it is the brothers' different skin tones—handed down by different fathers—that allow them to work through the colorist tensions in Haitian society in a way that twins never could. Similarly, the narrator's own call that we uncouple the brothers from their historical past, should be seen for what it is: an

attempt to simultaneously profit from a classicizing genealogy of foundation while attempting to excise the uncomfortable fratricide that is its condition of possibility.

In fact, by allowing "Romulus" and "Rémus" to stand as composite characters for multiple historical actors in the Haitian revolution, the text sidesteps the possibility that any one singular act of violence, one assassination, could even extinguish "Rémus," who would continue to live on as the narrative shell for another still-living actor. In this way, rather than simply *repeating* the myth of the foundation of Rome to show the traits shared by early Rome and Haiti, Bergeaud's use of "Romulus" and "Rémus" *rewrites* it, pens an *alternate history* of the founding of Rome in which the foundation of a new state would not require the death of the (br)other.

This attempt to limit the scope of foundational fratricidal violence goes a long way towards explaining the narrator's insistence that we not delve too deeply into the possible analogical possibilities offered by his nomenclature. Indeed this may help offer a partial explanation—I will return to others—as to why the narrative of *Stella* concludes as it does. By ending the main narrative at the 1804 Proclamation of Independence, the narrative averts its eyes from the 1806 brutal assassination of Dessalines [Romulus] by Pétion [Rémus] and others. Had it decided to linger, it would it would have seen the violent physical dismemberment of not only the first Haitian head of state, but of the Haitian territory itself into two distinct political entities: the kingdom of the North led by the black Henri Christophe and the Republic of Haiti led by the mulatto, Alexandre Pétion. Or, rather, did Bergeaud's narrator see it and hope to conceal it from us with the warning about drawing historical analogies? Perhaps knowing the conclusion of the myth of the twins would help answer the

question. According to one account, Romulus was hacked to pieces by senators who saw in him a growing tyrant[48]…

Le génie de la patrie

Despite the resistance to framing the narrative of Haiti's revolutionary struggle, as we have seen, in foundational *fratricide*, it is clear, if only from the efforts placed to preempt and later arrest violence, that the tension between the brothers would form an essential part of the narrative. In a relatively well-commented scene, taken from the chapter, "Le génie de la Patrie," ["The Spirit of the Homeland"] and which takes place during a period of warfare between the brothers, the narrator is overcome with a series of interrogations about Rémus' seemingly unexplainable capitulation to Romulus's military force. "Pourquoi Rémus, avec son bouillant courage, son invincible audace, s'arrêta-t-il au milieu de ses succès, comme s'il n'avait voulu que faire respecter son commandement, conquérir les villes disputes, protéger ses limites » (Bergeaud, 124) ? [Why did Remus, with his ardent courage, his invincible audacity, stop in the midst of his success, as if he had wanted nothing other than to have others respect his orders, conquer disputed cities and protect his limits."] Yet the answer that the narrator gives takes an unlikely turn towards the *marvelous* in a conscious critique of the epistemological limits of historical discourse.

Pourquoi cela?

[48] Fraschetti, p. 85. According to the other account he ascended to heaven as a divinity. What is rather fascinating is that Joan Dayan, in her analysis of the contributions of ritualistic and spiritual memory to the historical record, explicitly links the dismemberment of Dessalines to his later rebirth as divinity, or lwa, of vaudou, resolving the seeming contradiction posed by the conclusion of the myth of the founding of Rome. See "Dismemberment, Naming and Divinity," in Dayan, Joan. *Haiti, History and the Gods.* University of California Press, 1998.

> *C'est ce que l'histoire n'a pas dit*. Elle a bien assigné des probables aux événements dont Rémus fut victime par sa faute ; mais *cette faute est demeurée inexpliquée, et nous ajouterons inexplicable* pour quiconque ignore la considération secrète et puissante qui prévalut dans l'esprit du frère de Romulus. *L'histoire ne peut dire que ce qu'elle sait*. Sa vue, *bornée* à l'horizon des choses naturelles, *saisit difficilement la vérité qui luit au-delà*. Le merveilleux n'est pas dans son domaine. Elle *abandonne* le champ du mystère au roman, toute aise d'avoir cette fois à raconter une action sérieuse liée au motif caché que voici[49] :
>
> ["Why is this the case?
>
> That is what history has not said. It has assigned probabilities to the events wherein Remus was a victim of his own fault; but *this mistake remains unexplained and, we would add, unexplainable* for whoever is unaware of the secret and powerful consideration which prevailed in the mind of Romulus' brother. *History cannot say but that which it knows.* Its vision, whose horizon is *bounded* by natural things, *has difficulty grasping the truth that shines beyond.* The marvelous is not within its domain. It *leaves* the realm of the mysterious to the novel, which itself takes pleasure in having to narrate, this time, a serious action related to the following secret motive:"]

Whereas before the narrator characterized literary forms of discourse by their lack of a technique or method (*nous n'avons ni carte, ni boussole, ni connaissances nautiques*) [(*we have neither map, nor compass, nor nautical knowledge*)] and an association to dissimulation (*le lac menteur*) [(*the disingenuous lake*)], here, the epistemological basis of history's pretense to verifiable truth claims is turned into a taut disciplinary straitjacket limiting its discursive movements: *l'histoire <u>ne peut dire que</u> ce qu'elle sait* [*History <u>cannot say but that</u> which it knows*]. Expressed almost entirely in negative formulations, the body of history finds itself mute (*n'a pas dit*, *inexplicable*) [(*has not said, unexplainable*)], blind (*sa vue bornée*) [(*its vision bounded*)], and ultimately, rather clumsy (*saisit difficilement*) [(*has difficulty grasping*)] in its dealings with the *truth*. In fact, the narrator suggests that these disciplinary limitations prevent history, paradoxically, from speaking a truth that glimmers beyond the natural veneer of objects accessible to positivist analysis and thus disrupts the initial binary which would have placed the production of truth claims

[49] Bergeaud, p.124-5. My emphasis.

purely on the side of historical discourse whether as *fleuve de vérité* [*river of truth*] or as *écho sonore* [*resounding echo*].

Novelistic discourse, on the other hand, sovereign in its own domain, is capable of articulating the uncertain, the unbelievable, and the unknowable and can thus delve into the psychic space of Rémus and discover the secret of his capitulation that history cannot access. The form of the novel, then, is revealed not to be a mere arabesque onto the already existing language of historical discourse; its role as a supplement is not, as Bergeaud had previously suggested, merely to attract potentially uninterested readers, but as the well-spring for *novel* truths using an epistemological apparatus unconcerned with history's cardinal rule that it speak only what it knows. In fact, in his overview of the aesthetic arguments which led to the modern concept of "history," Koslleck notes that Aristotle's preference for poetry over history (understood in its pre-modern sense), was centered on the fact that history could speak only what had happened, while poetry spoke to what was possible.[50] In doing so, the novel reveals to the reader that if Rémus abandoned the idea of continuing the war against his brother, he did so for one reason and one reason only: left to gather his thoughts alone in the forest, Rémus was commanded by a mysterious Giant—*le génie de la Patrie* [*the spirit of the Homeland*]—to stop and so it was.

At the end of the text's explicit remarks distinguishing historical from literary discourse, then, we do not emerge with the same image of the binary structure that Bergeaud alluded to in his prefatory note—historical core around which we may lace satin literary ribbons—just as it is not clear that history would remain, after a sustained

[50] Koselleck, *L'expérience de l'histoire*, p. 29.

interrogation of their relative strengths, the preferred, authoritative discourse. In Bergeaud the literary reveals itself to be (an)historical—quite literally, as we have seen in the case of Romulus and Rémus—even as the historical, we are told, absolutely requires the supplemental discourse of fiction not only to ease its optative ache, but more importantly still, *to fill in* the gaps, lacking, as it does, total dominion of the narratives of what happened in its past.

Perceptions of Historical Time in Literary Realization

« C'est entre deux chapitres d'un titre bien éloquent que se lit *Stella :* Saint-Domingue et Haïti, c'est-à-dire *l'esclavage et la liberté !* »[51]

["It is between two chapters bearing eloquent titles that *Stella* is read: Saint-Domingue and Haiti, which is to say *slavery and liberty*!"]

Admittedly, *Stella* does, at least at the level of chapter arrangement, appear to propose a certain way of engaging with the question of history as teleology. As Aurèle Chevry notes in his rather hasty analysis of the novel, *Stella* does begin with a chapter entitled "Saint-Domingue" and conclude on the chapter, "Haïti." Given these parameters we could reasonably expect that the novel relate the pertinent events of the Revolutionary period that allowed Saint-Domingue, France's Caribbean Pearl, to become Haiti, the world's first Black Republic. In other words, with the turning of the page serving as metronome, the reader should see slavery inexorably give way to liberty. That is, at any rate, the interpretation Chevry has given to the textual arrangement of the chapters. However, it is precisely the very moment in *Stella* that

[51] Chevry, p. 233. Original emphasis.

inspired Chevry's commentary which should now give us pause and complicate our understanding of the flow of time in the text:

> *Haïti signifiait liberté, Saint-Domingue esclavage*. Les héros de 1803 *re*stituèrent au pays son *premier* nom, le nom *que lui avaient donné les Indiens,* dont ils devenaient *les héritiers* par la volonté de la Providence, indépendamment de toute communauté d'origine ; ils le nommèrent Haïti, *en mémoire de ces mêmes Indiens qui y avaient joui de l'indépendance et du bonheur*, jusqu'au jour où le vent leur amena des hôtes inconnus qu'ils furent, hélas ! trop pressés d'accueillir.[52]
>
> ["*Haiti meant liberty, Saint-Domingue slavery.* The heroes of 1803 gave the country *back* its *first* name, the name *the Indians had given to it*, and of whom they had become the *heirs* by the will of Providence, independently of the communities in which they found their origins; they named it Haiti, *in memory of these same Indians who had taken pleasure in their independence and happiness* until the day when the wind brought them unfamiliar guests that they were, unfortunately, all too happy to welcome.]

At first glance the leading sentence excerpted here contains many of the same elements as the statement from Chevry's commentary—*Haiti, liberté; Saint-Domingue, esclavage* [Haiti, liberty; Saint-Domingue, slavery]—yet, I would argue, the inversion of the clauses produces a remarkably different temporality in Chevry. On its own, Bergeaud's placement of Haiti prior to Saint-Domingue does not, in and of itself, imply an alternative reconfiguration of time; the rhetorical emphasis on Haiti standing in as the signifier for liberty could merit its placement at the head of the sentence. Nevertheless, read chronologically, "Haiti" emerges as the land of independence and happiness that once was and was forcibly relinquished to the Europeans prior to the establishment of the colony of Saint-Domingue. In other words, Chevry misses the mark by failing to recognize that the "Haiti" alluded to the in the first sentence is not the Republic founded by the Haitian Revolution, but the island of its Pre-Colombian inhabitants. It is only in this way that he is able to figure the passage from Saint-Domingue to Haiti in the *forward-movement* analogous to the

[52] Bergeaud, p. 243. My emphasis.

reading of *Stella* from its first chapter to its last. However, through its language of restitution (*restituèrent*) ([*gave back*]), inheritance (*héritiers*) ([*heirs*]), and memory (*en mémoire de*) ([*in memory of*]) the passage consistently and self-evidently returns to the autochthonous past of the Amerindians which grounds and justifies the act of naming Haiti, "Haiti" in the first place.

Bergeaud's Haiti, then, does not emerge out of revolutionary struggle and the future it made possible, but of a conscious imagined return to the Pre-Colombian past. In doing so, Bergeaud inscribes his mythic counter-christening in an established network of writings not only by other nineteenth century Haitian writers such as Louis Joseph Janvier[53] who saw in the act of naming an act of restitution, but of those such as Beaubrun Ardouin who specifically interpreted it as an anticolonial act: "Une idée, émise on ne sait non plus par qui le premier, avait réuni tous les suffrages : c'était de restituer à l'île entière, qui avait formé le nouvel Etat, le nom qu'elle portait sous ses premiers habitants, --Haïti. […] *C'était encore un nouveau moyen de rompre avec le passé colonial, justement abhorré.*»[54] ["An idea, put forward by one no longer knows who first, had gained sway: it was to give back to the entire island, out of which had been formed the new State, the name that it had had under its first inhabitants, —Haiti. […] *It was yet another innovative way of breaking with the rightly abhorred colonial past.*"]

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[53] « Le 1er janvier 1804, réunis en fédération armée sur la place de la ville de Gonaïves, ils proclamèrent solennellement leur indépendance et <u>*redonnèrent à leur pays le nom aborigène d'Haïti*</u> (1) [(1) « En langue caraïbe, *Haïti* signifie *Terre boisée ou montagneuse.*] »
["On January 1st, 1804, gathered together in armed federation at the square of the city of Gonaïves, they proclaimed their independence and <u>*gave back the aboriginal name of Haiti to their country*</u> (1) [(1) "In Caribbean language, Haiti means *wooded or mountainous land*.]]. Janvier, Louis Joseph. *Les constitutions d'Haïti.* Paris : C. Marpon et E. Flammarion. 1886. P. 28. My emphasis.

[54] Ardouin, Beaubrun. *Etudes sur l'histoire d'Haïti*. Tome 6. P. 7. My emphasis.

This idea admittedly has an incredible affective appeal; we take a particular pleasure in the retribution (historical and other) inflicted by the community of underestimated ex-slaves on their former masters. Yet, I would argue, that the history of this unique moment remains so fossilized and under-thought in contemporary Haitian Studies that few, even today, know that the term, "Haiti," as Geggus has recently suggested, may have first emerged among the *white* planter class of Saint-Domingue growing weary of economic management by the metropolitan government[55]. Thinking through "Haiti" (and later the adjectival, "Haitian") requires recognizing the multiple sediments of anticolonial animus that the nomenclature contains within it. It is obvious that if the nation came to be founded upon the notion of an anticolonial restitution by blacks against Europeans, the idea that white Creoles of French origin from Les Cayes might have also wanted to break away from a "rightly abhorred colonial past" had to be disavowed. "Haiti," in other words, had to be rendered incompatible with the white Creole forces of pro-slavery which might have first imagined it. There is no doubt such an effort was successful; what is less obvious is an account of how this came to be. My accounts of the symbolic components of black Haitian nationalism in the third section of this chapter will attempt a partial response to this very question.

Finally, it is worth noting that Chevry's implication that *Stella* contains the linear history of the passage from Saint-Domingue to Haiti, from slavery to liberty, could be called into question simply on the basis of the narrative content of the text's final chapter: "Haiti." While I think it best to return to the this extraordinary chapter

[55] Geggus, David Patrick. "The Naming of Haiti." *Haitian Revolutionary Studies.* Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2002. P. 216.

once it is possible to read it in light of our discussions of the reconfigurations of narrative time, it should suffice to say, provisionally, that the principal intrigue is resolved in the aptly titled penultimate chapter—"Liberté, Indépendence."

Prolepsis as Solace: Visiting "Saint-Domingue"

If the previous remarks demonstrated *Stella*'s, at least partial, resistance to a reading of history as a linear, forward-oriented retelling (*river*) in its backwards glances towards its Amerindian past, the first chapter, "Saint-Domingue," serves as its proleptic compliment, rerouting time's present course by several evocations of the future.

"Saint-Domingue," is typographically divided into two sections. In the first section, the reader is introduced to the brutal social organization of the French slave colony of Saint-Domingue. Initially cast in the eternalizing and event-less descriptive hold of the imperfect, the narrator, sympathetic with the plight of one particular, yet anonymous enslaved family presents the reader with the image of their extreme destitution, contrasting it with the sumptuous excesses of their cruel and despotic master. Yet, as the gaze withdraws, the text briefly, and awkwardly, adopts the register and diction of the marvelous fairy tale to recount the surfeit of violence that allowed slavery to function as a longstanding institution.

> *Une enchanteresse de la fable avait transformé des hommes en pourceaux, afin de les retenir plus sûrement sous ses lois fatales* : c'était ici l'indispensable métamorphose qui devait en réalité s'accomplir à l'aide des chaînes, du carcan, et du fouet homicide.
>
> Et dans le cours de cette transformation immonde, l'esclave, pour une simple faute, était tantôt scié en deux, tantôt précipité dans la chaudière à sucre en ébullition,

> d'autres fois placé sur la grille ardente des fourneaux, d'autres fois encore enterré vivant !!![56]
>
> [An enchantress of the fable had transformed men into pigs in order to detain them more certainly under her inexorable laws; this was the indispensable metamorphosis that was to be accomplished, in reality, with the help of chains, collars, and the homicidal whip.
>
> And during the course of this vile transformation, the slave, for nothing other than a simple mistake was alternately sawed in two, or thrown into a cauldron of boiling sugar, and, at other times, placed on the burning grill of the ovens, and other times still, buried alive!!!"]

Slavery's brutality, then, is twofold; first, it instantiates the subject of the obedient "slave," out of what used to be a "man," through its violent disciplinary technology of interpellation. Second, no longer a man, the slave can be executed in any number of methods which the narrator relates in one evocative enumeration that culminates in the indignation of a triple exclamation.

Yet, it is the passage that follows this description of brutality which reveals the text's characteristic procedure for reconfiguring the relationship between the narrated present and its future.

> Tant de forfaits ne pouvaient rester impunis. Ils ***attirèrent*** la foudre sur la tête de leurs auteurs. La Justice un jour, sortie d'en haut, ***vint*** prononcer solennellement entre les oppresseurs et les opprimés, les bourreaux et les victimes. Et la vengeance ***fut*** terrible ![57]
>
> ["So many heinous crimes could not remain unpunished. They ***attracted*** divine judgement [foudre] on the heads of those responsible. One day Justice, descending from on high, ***came*** to solemnly pronounce judgement between oppressors and the oppressed, between persecutors and victims. And that vengeance ***was*** terrible!"]

In this short paragraph, the novel, which has just begun and which purports to recount the history of the Haitian Revolution, accelerates the course of history until it arrives at the moment of an aggressive and radical antislavery. The narrator's first instance of prolepsis—there will be others—here enacts a particularly swift vengeance; in a

[56] Bergeaud, p. 24-5. My emphasis.
[57] Bergeaud, p. 25. My emphasis.

lightning-fast movement from the images of slaves cast into cauldrons of boiling sugar, the narrative immediately recounts the divine justice of God's wrath. Thus, it is almost as if the narrator could not expect his interlocutors to contend with the accumulation of suffering on the part of the enslaved, with the prolepsis serving as a reminder that, despite the dark clouds gathering over the novel's protagonists, the tale will end favorably. In such a framework, the prolepsis also instantiates the desire of a reader to bridge the unknown gap between present suffering and the announced, beneficent outcome.

However before returning to other examples of prolepsis in the text, I would like to linger briefly on the second part of this chapter. As I previously stated, "Saint-Domingue" is typographically divided into two sections, the first of which I have already examined and concludes on the intimation of the antislavery violence to come; the second, however, radically alters the course of the chapter. If the first section encouraged the reader to sympathize with the suffering of the enslaved, this rather manipulative second section, distinguished by a direct address from the narrator, forces the reader to identify with the *white colonials* or *potential white colonials*. One paragraph will suffice to make the point clear.

> Mais, quel riant séjour que *Saint-Domingue* la Reine des Antilles! Que de beautés, que de merveilles réunies en ce lieu par la main glorieuse du Créateur ! Amis de la nature, philosophes, poètes, *venez vous réjouir, vous instruire, vous inspirer au sein de tant de magnificence* ; *venez vous rassasier d'émotions nouvelles*, réchauffer votre esprit à de vivifiants rayons, désaltérer votre âme à toutes les sources de poésie et d'amour[58].
>
> ["Saint-Domingue, Queen of the Antilles! What a lovely place to sojourn! What beauties, what marvels reunited in this place by the glorious hand of the Creator! Friends of nature, philosophers, poets, *come to be delighted, to be instructed, to be inspired in the midst of such magnificence; come to have your fill of new emotions*, to

[58] Bergeaud, p. 25. My emphasis.

> comfort your mind with invigorating rays, to quench your soul's thirst at all of the sources of poetry and love."]

It would be relatively easy to demonstrate that the passage, in its use of natural description, superlative exclamations, and, above all, the repetition of the polite imperative of the verb *venir* (["to come"]), coalesce to give the impression not only of genre travel writing, but of the transports of a travel brochure. In beckoning the reader to visit "Saint-Domingue" the text's siren's song reinserts the reader—following the proleptic jump—into the "proper time" of the novel. That is, the revolution, as the colonial "Saint-Domingue" suggests, is yet to come. If this is indeed the case, then the text interpellates readers not as mid-nineteenth century French people, but with the *very* French whose violent excesses would lead to their own massacre. Saint-Domingue, the chapter suggests, is a fatal attraction.

Proleptic Visions

This example of prolepsis and its attendant consequences, while significant, is far from the only one in the text. In order to give a sense of the temporal configuration of the novel as it is realized in the act of reading, and which will later shed light on the text's noteworthy blind spots, I turn now to other significant moments of prolepsis as used by both the narrator and by the eponymous Stella.

In the aftermath of the brothers' first successful military campaign against the forces of Le Colon, Rémus lingers on the battlefield collecting weapons and munitions from the corpses of his fallen rivals. This seemingly self-evident strategic act nevertheless compels the narrator into a proleptic commentary on the way in which the Haitian Revolutionary war *had been* fought.

> …
> C'est bien ainsi que les Indigènes d'Haïti *se sont procuré* les instruments guerriers à l'aide desquels *ils ont conquis* l'Indépendance et *fondé* la patrie. On peut dire sans figure que l'esclavage *a été décapité* avec ses propres armes. Cette circonstance donne à la lutte un *intérêt sacré* qui la rapproche de celle de *David et de Goliath*.[59]
>
> ["…
> It is in this very way that the Natives of Haiti *procured* the instruments of war with whose help *they won* their Independence and *founded* their homeland. One could say without exaggeration that slavery *was decapitated* with its own weapons. This circumstance gives the struggle a *sacred character* which draws it closer to that of the struggle between *David and Goliath*."]

The proleptic jump—signaled typographically by the dangling ellipsis—transports the reader to an unspecified future in which the events of the Haitian revolution are clearly (and grammatically) past events[60]. For that brief moment (the chapter's five concluding paragraphs), the narrator reiterates the successful acquisition of civil liberty and territorial independence by the Indigenous Army. Yet, the backwards glance that captures the revolution's end in its gaze also sees the historic struggle between the overwhelmingly powerful Goliath and the blessed David. The analogy between David and *Stella*'s protagonists, set into motion by the seemingly divine retribution of being defeated (*décapité*) with one's own weapons, not only serves to cast the Haitian victory over the French once more in the register of the divine (*un intérêt sacré*) [*a sacred character*], but, as we have seen, conjoins the novel's "present" to both its "future" and its "past."

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[59] Bergeaud, p. 70. My emphasis.

[60] This is not an isolated phenomenon. Another example which follows the template offered by the passage quoted above can be found in the chapter entitled "La Grotte" and which, within the text's chronology, can be dated to prior to Sonthonax's 1793 proclamation of General Emancipation. "… Dans la nature, tout ce qui est fécond est double. La combinaison de deux éléments de couleurs différentes dont se compose la société haïtienne ne peut qu'être favorable à sa prospérité. *Elle a déjà produit la liberté, l'indépendance ; elle produira encore la civilisation*. » ["… In nature all that is fecund is double. The combination of two elements of different colors of which Haitian society is composed could not be but favorable to its prosperity. *It has already produced liberty, independence; it will yet bring about civilization*."] Bergeaud, pp. 89-90. My emphasis.

In order to advance the argument, one clarification is needed. The reconfigurations in time that we have been discussing are the result of the *narrator*'s proleptic movements; they are actualized by the reader in the act of reading. If narratological prolepsis in *Stella* is, as I have been arguing, concerned with managing affect and offering consolation and encouragement *to its readers* in its assurance of divine punishments, it does not act on the level of the protagonists. Yet, what is fascinating is that Stella, the idealized mythic *guerrière* Romulus and Rémus rescued from Le Colon's burning mansion, performs an analogous function vis-à-vis the brothers from *within* the course of narrated events. That is, it becomes clear relatively early in the narrative, that Stella has the ability to perceive events in the future and convey them to the brothers if she believes it will aid them in their struggles against Le Colon.

> Stella rêvait pour ses protégés une destinée qu'ils ne pressentaient point. Le but était éloigné. *Elle se chargeait de les y conduire par une voie rude, pénible, mais sûre.* […] Ils devaient s'égarer dans les ténèbres, se prendre pour ennemis, se combattre et se reconnaître ensuite, pour regretter leur erreur et pleurer leurs blessures.
> Mais à la fin, compensation immense ! ils ***seraient*** libres, indépendants, citoyens d'un pays échu à leur courage et à leur mérite. Ils ***démentiraient*** d'injustes préventions, ***souffletteraient*** leurs calomniateurs, ***réintégreraient*** dans les droits de l'humanité une race proscrite et lui ***fonderaient*** une patrie glorieuse sur les ruines de la colonie coupable.[61]
>
> ["For her protégés Stella dreamt of a destiny that they foresaw not. The goal was distant. *She took it upon herself to lead them to it by means of a harsh and tiresome but certain path.* […]
> They were no doubt going to go astray in the darkness, take each other as enemies, fight against one another only to recognize each other afterwards in order to deplore their error and cry over their wounds.
> But at the end of it all, immense reward! They ***would be*** free, independent, citizens of a country owed to their courage and to their merit. They ***would refute*** unjust detentions, ***they would slap down*** those that had slandered them, ***they would reinstate*** in the rights of humanity a banished race and ***would found*** for it a glorious homeland upon the ruins of the guilty colony.]

[61] Bergeaud, p.73. My emphasis.

In one relatively brief glimpse into Stella's interior thoughts the reader learns that she, like the narrator, has access to the entirety of the chronology of the Haitian Revolution (as it will be recounted in *this* text). Yet, the final paragraph, with its repeated use of the conditional mode, suggests that Stella's temporal vantage point is structurally different from that of the narrator. Whereas the narrator, as we have seen, recounted his proleptic pronouncements in the past indicative, Stella's conditional mode is precisely the mode we would expect to see if her thoughts of futurity were recast through the filter of the narrator's indirect discourse. It suffices to catch Stella in a moment of direct discourse to see the conditional as properly futural. As she says shortly thereafter to the brothers: "On *poussera* même l'aveuglement et la stupidité jusqu'à s'en remettre un jour aux chiens du soin de vous réduire. Entendez-vous ? des chiens »[62]. ["Blindness and stupidity *will be advanced* to such an extent that the task of reducing your numbers will be delegated to dogs. Did you hear me? Dogs."] Said another way, as an embedded character "in time" with the narrative, Stella *looks forward* to the events yet-to-come; before French commissioner Sonthonax's arrival in the colony (1793; p.81), she has already foreseen, as of page 74, French General Rochambeau's later military use of man-eating dogs (1802; p.202).

Though seemingly similar to the narrator, Stella's proleptic comments function as prophecy rather than as remembrance. Yet, in both cases, as Stella makes explicit, the *intended* perlocutionary force of the temporal gesture is to offer solace, be it to the reader or the embedded protagonists. "Leur soumission respectueuse [des frères] cachait tant d'affliction que Stella, *pour les consoler, souleva le voile du temps et leur*

[62] Bergeaud, p. 74. My emphasis.

montra un coin de l'immense avenir »[63]. [« The respectful deference [of the brothers] hid such pain that Stella, *in order to console them, lifted the veil of time and showed them a corner of the immense future.*"]

Analepsis: Re-visting "Haïti"

Yet if both the narrator and the character of Stella can make use of prolepsis (either as prophecy or as remembrance) to accelerate the narrative to the moment of the proclamation of Independence and the tentative assurance of civil equality and liberty [1804], it make strike certain readers as odd that the text has difficulty articulating what occurs in the days, months, and years following this one institutionalized moment of Haitian national history.

On the one hand, Stella, the text suggests, may be unable to offer pronouncements about any post-revolutionary future because her sole divinely ordained purpose was to prepare the brothers and their forces for Independence. In her final, post-Proclamation speech to the Haitian people, Stella states: "J'étais appelée à vous secourir; je l'ai fait" ["I was called to give you aid; I have done it"] (Bergeaud, 236); once this objective has been realized, she is quickly evacuated from the text in a glorious ascension to heaven. So while prophetic visions of a post-revolutionary future may either be inaccessible to Stella or contrary to her divine purpose, the narrator, who has clearly established himself as writing from an ultra-future (writing as he does of the Revolution as clearly past) should be able to articulate *something* of

[63] Bergeaud, p. 87. My emphasis.

the tumultuous period spanning Independence [1804] and the year in which the text came into existence [1859].

He does not. This peculiar feature of the text has been noted by other commentators of *Stella*, including Anne Marty who wrote in her preface to the 2009 republication of the text: "Le silence de l'auteur sur la période post-Independence est parlant. Plus de cinquante ans sont passés depuis qu'existe Haïti, le nouveau pays. »[64] ["The author's silence concerning the post-Independence period is telling. More than fifty years have passed since the emergence of Haiti, the new nation."] Part of the answer may lie, as Marty suggests, in the seemingly necessarily return to an idealized narrative of the founding of the nation which would speak to the problems of the discursively absent moment-of-writing (Bergeaud, 14). However, such an account does not fully explain the multiple complex temporal reconfigurations—of which something like an anti-presentism is only one symptom—actualized by the text in the novel's final chapter, "Haïti," to which we now turn.

Let us reframe the problem before us. If, as we have previously stated, the penultimate chapter, "Liberté, Indépendence," concludes with the proclamation of Independence and if the novel has difficulty articulating post-revolutionary Haitian history, the question then becomes: what does the final chapter "Haïti" (falsely read as the telos of the novel) actually concern? The reader will excuse me if I briefly delay my response in an attempt to convey a sense of the final chapter's surprising turn. Here, is the final paragraph of the penultimate chapter:

[64] Marty, Anne. "Préface de Anne Marty ». *Stella.* Carouge-Genève : Editions Zoé et les Classiques du Monde, 2009. P. 13.

> Les deux frères et le people s'agenouillèrent, vivement émus. L'adorable vierge [Stella] leur adressa son plus tendre sourire et, déployant ses ailes d'ange, prit son vol vers les cieux. Tous la suivirent d'un œil humide, jusqu'au moment où elle se perdit dans l'espace, laissant après elle un long sillon d'or.[65]
>
> [The two brothers and the people, deeply moved, emphatically knelt down. The virgin worthy of such adoration [Stella] extended an affectionate smile and, deploying her angel wings, took flight towards the heavens. Everyone followed her with a glistening eye until the moment when she was lost to the sky, having left behind her only a long, golden trail.]

And, after turning one page, here is the opening paragraph of the final chapter, « Haïti » :

> *Haïti*
> Quand Christophe Colomb, poussé par son génie, s'élança sur des mers inconnues à la recherché d'un nouveau monde, il découvrit après un long et périlleux voyage, l'île qui fut depuis le théâtre des événements dont nous avons fait l'incomplet récit, et qui lui apparut comme une oasis dans le désert des mers. Les Indiens la connaissaient sous le nom d'Haïti (terre montagneuse) ; il l'appela Hispaniola INSULA SPAÑA (île espagnole).[66]
>
> [Haiti
> When Christopher Columbus, driven by his genius, set forth upon uncharted waters in search of a new world, he discovered, after a long and perilous journey, the island that since became the theater of the events for which we have provided an incomplete account, and which appeared to him as an oasis in a desert of seas. The Indians knew it by the name of Haiti (mountainous land); he named it Hispaniola, INSULA SPAÑA (Spanish isle).]

The final chapter, then, is no less than another retelling of the history of the island of Haiti. However, rather than begin the clock at the pre-revolutionary period of the late eighteenth century, as does *Stella*'s first chapter, "Saint-Domingue," "Haïti," winds the clock hands back to "1492." Recast in a hybrid genre blending quasi-ethnographic accounts[67] with more explicitly historiographic prose[68] than elsewhere in

[65] Bergeaud, p. 237.
[66] Bergeaud, p. 238.
[67] « Les Indiens d'Haïti adoraient des animaux hideux tels que la couleuvre, le crocodile, et joignaient à ce culte celui des images grossières, qu'ils fabriquaient eux-mêmes ». ["The Indians of Haiti worshipped hideous animals such as the serpent, the crocodile and added to these practices the worship of crude images of their own fashioning."] Bergeaud, p. 239.
[68] « C'était vers le commencement du dix-septième siècle. Des aventuriers […] vinrent s'établir dans l'île de la Tortue ». ["It was near the beginning of the seventeenth century. Explorers […] came to live on the isle of Tortuga."] Bergeaud, p. 239.

the narrative, "Haïti," in its simplified, accelerated style reads like something taken from the pages of an introductory textbook.

What is lacking then, in my opinion, from Marty's assessment is not her realization that *Stella* displays a demonstrable resistance to narrating the present [1850s], or even the relatively recent past [1804-1859], but the notion that in its absence something is narrated in its place. In other words, if it were enough to provide an idealized retelling of the glory of the Heroes of Independence for the benefit of the present, the text's final chapter, with its return to the ultra-past [1492], would have been completely superfluous. Present avoidance here seems tied to an explicit evocation of the aboriginal past, suggesting rather forcefully in its structure, as elsewhere in its content, that the Haitian tale of Independence, and indeed "Haïtianness," is difficult to articulate without an awareness of the island's indigenous populations.

The question then arises; if "Haïti" is a retelling of the events of the history of the inhabitants of Haiti, narrated at a more frantic pace than the remainder of the text, what happens when it too arrives at January 2nd, 1804, the day following the Declaration of Independence? Despite the drastic discursive differences characterizing the style of this final chapter—that is, the use of proper names for existing historical actors and locations as well as dates—at the very moment following independence, the narrator briefly reintroduces the novel's earlier fictional characters (Romulus, Rémus, Le Colon). In this way, the subsequent massacre of the young nation's white population is partially figured as vengeance against Le Colon for having spoken of a rumored forthcoming re-invasion on the part of the French.

Yet, it should be noted that the narrator appears to go to some lengths in resisting a complete interpenetration of the two genres within this chapter. For one, the reappearance of the novel's protagonists is brief; following the realization of their vengeance, they will not be heard from again. Second, note how the end of the revolution is cast once in terms of the novel's composite characters, and again, following the ellipsis, in more traditional historical language.

> Cependant la population française avait disparu du sol, *le Colon* le premier. *On* s'était saisi de lui ; il avait déjà le tremblement de la mort. On l'avait traîné sur la tombe *de l'Africaine*, forcé de s'y agenouiller, de demander pardon de ses iniquités à Dieu et aux hommes, et là, on avait versé tout son sang.
>
> …
>
> Ainsi s'accomplit la révolution de Saint-Domingue, inaugurée par un supplice, le supplice *d'Ogé, de Chavannes* et d'autres martyrs, terminée par un massacre**…**[69]
>
> [Nevertheless the French population had disappeared from the land, *The Colon* first among them. *He had been captured*; and was already trembling in anticipation of his death. He was dragged on the tomb *of the African woman*, made to kneel before it, and to ask forgiveness for his inequities before God and men, and there, was all of his blood poured out.
>
> …
>
> And thus the revolution of Saint-Domingue was realized, inaugurated by torture, the torture of *Ogé, of Chavannes*, and of other martyrs, it was ended in a massacre…]

It could be held against me and Marty, I suppose, that the acknowledgement of the massacre of the white populations of Haiti could suggest that the narratological silence surrounding the post-Independence period is not as widespread as we have lead our readers to believe. Perhaps. However, as the citation above makes clear, the narrator clearly sees the massacre as the definitive event that brings closure to the Revolutionary struggle, a requisite, if gory, coda. (*Ainsi s'accomplit…*). Others might note that the several paragraphs are quite explicit in naming the numerous revolutionary struggles across North and South America to which Haitians generously and directly contributed. "En 1816, Bolivar vint en quelque sorte se retremper dans

[69] Bergeaud, pp. 246-7. My emphasis.

son sein pour la lutte qui allait émanciper l'Amérique espagnole" ["In 1816, Bolivar came to Haiti to, in a manner of speaking, take in what he would need for the struggle that was going to liberate Spanish America."] (Bergeaud, 247). I would point out that while these passages provide an important intimation of post-Independence foreign policy of the young Caribbean state, they do not give an account of what was happening *within* Haiti. The only suggestion of post-revolutionary nineteenth century domestic history is found in the cryptic remark: "A cette dernière époque [1816], Haïti, menacée à l'intérieur, avait besoin de l'assistance de tous ses fils" ["During this period [1816], Haiti, threatened from within, needed the assistance of all of her sons."] (Bergeaud, 247). There is no explicit mention of even those notable domestic events that would fill the gap between the massacre [1804] and the foreign assistance offered to Bolivar [1816], no less between Bolivar and the later moment-of-writing. That is, no talk of the assassination of the first Haitian head of state and the subsequent political division of Haiti into two, competing states.

However, I would like to suggest that one way to think through the narrative analepsis and discursive silences produced by this final chapter is to reread *Stella* through the expansive, multivolume *Etudes sur l'histoire d'Haïti* (1854), authored by Bergeaud's friend and historian, Beaubrun Ardouin. The organization underlying the eleven-tome *Etudes* is relatively unsurprising. The *Etudes* structure Haitian history according to two vast *périodes*—French and Haitian—which Ardouin takes care to subdivide into numerous, more-readily digestible *époques* referenced simply by an ordinal number (*Période française:* 5e époque). What interests us for our purposes, here, is the break between the 5th and 6th tomes. Tome five addresses the sixth and

final epoch of the French period; it concludes with the victory of the insurgents and the military surrender of the French but prior to the Proclamation of Haitian Independence itself. Given this rather dramatic conclusion, the stage is set, one would expect, for Tome six to open on Boisrand Tonnerre's oft-cited violent inspiration in drafting the Proclamation[70]. But this is far from being the case.

Rather, the sixth tome, which inaugurates the first epoch of the properly Haitian period, begins with a passage that mirrors *Stella*'s final chapter, "Haïti." That is, in lieu of continuing the main thrust of the historical narrative, this first Haitian epoch, begins not with the events of late 1803-early 1804, but with a brief, unnumbered chapter entitled: "Coup d'œil sur la fondation des colonies européennes dans les Antilles.[71]" ["A brief glance at the foundation of the European colonies in the Antilles."] Appearing as it does before the tome's true first chapter[72], the text's organizational and anachronistic breach—its "zero" moment—allows Ardouin the liberty to return to the time of the Indigenous inhabitants of the Caribbean and quickly recount their subsequent annihilation at the hands of their European colonizers. The multiple parallels between Ardouin and Bergeaud in this moment of their texts are indeed rather striking.

However, I want to return to the suggestion that aside from this echoed content across similar moments in their narratives, this "zero" chapter may help us further interrogate *Stella*'s temporal organization. If I have used the term organizational and

[70] "Pour rédiger cet acte il nous faut la peau d'un blanc pour parchemin, son crâne pour écritoire, son sang pour encre et une baïonnette pour plume ». [« In order to draft this act, what is needed is the skin of a white man as a parchment, his skull as an inkwell, his blood as ink and a bayonet as a quill."] Ardouin. *Etudes sur l'histoire d'Haïti*. Vol.2. Tome 6. Pp.7-8.
[71] Ardouin, Beaubrun. *Etudes sur l'histoire d'Haïti.* Vol. 2. Tome 6. Pp. 3-6.
[72] A properly labeled « Chapitre 1 » will follow.

anachronistic breach, it is not simply because the forward motion of the narrative has been arrested and turned on itself but because the embedded content of this backwards glance (*coup d'oeil*) is in direct contradiction to form of the *Etudes*; that is, Ardouin has placed a chronometer on the upper margins of each page, allowing the reader to know the year of each page's related events. As Ardouin's upper-margins clearly want to demonstrate, to turn the page is to advance forward in time; yet, what should we make of this "Coup d'oeil", this historical overview, that both does and does not "occur" in 1804 according to the chronological metronome of the upper margins? Formally, the text suggests a troublingly anachronistic *simultaneity* and superposition between the events immediately following the Haitian Revolution and the autochthonous past of the Caribbean.

One rather simple way out of our dilemma would be to hypothesize that the puzzling temporal structure evidenced in the final chapter of *Stella* was influenced by Ardouin's post-revolutionary "Coup d'oeil". This may be true; as I have previously mentioned, the two were not only close friends, but Ardouin served as the editor for the first publication of *Stella*. However, this does not alter the fact that in both texts recounting the *after* of the revolution—which ends at different moments for these authors— demands formal anachronism. It as if the timeline of Haitian history had a point of discontinuity, a discursive singularity about which historical and narrative discourse are seen struggling to write. Benedict Anderson has said of modern nation-states that although they are generally acknowledged to take part of the greater chronology of world-events—Haiti was founded in "1804"—that each nation, nevertheless, simultaneously imagines its *always having existed* and its *always will*

be.[73] Read in this way, both *Stella* and the *Etudes* lay bare the very moment when the narrative of the foundation of the historically "new" nation is inscribed into the mythic time of its *always-already* (prehistoric) existence.

For all of the similarities the two authors might share in this particular textual moment, they take a markedly different stance when the temporal brackets around this discursive discontinuity are finally closed. Ardouin concludes his zero chapter by explicitly ending the breach in time and opening up onto the *future* that he must still relate. "Nous allons voir maintenant quel usage ces hommes de la race noire firent de cette belle victoire. »[74] ["And now we shall see to what use these men of the black race put their glorious victory."] This is further marked by a return to a more conventional enumeration of chapters. In contrast, Bergeaud's "Haïti," as we have previously said, contains relatively few of the events of post-revolutionary domestic history that could have been recounted. Yet, this is not to say that "Haïti" does not open up onto a future at all. Instead, it generates the future to which we now turn.

Au contact de la civilisation

In the novel's closing paragraph the narrator, daring for once to gaze forward towards the future Haitians ought to be working to bring about, offers a brief description of the increasingly important role *la civilisation* will play in Haitian and international affairs.

> La civilisation n'est pas exclusive ; elle attire au lieu de repousser. C'est par elle que doit s'opérer l'alliance du genre humain. *Grâce à sa toute-puissante influence, il n'y aura bientôt sur la terre ni noirs, ni blancs, ni jaunes, ni Africains, ni Européens, ni Asiatiques, ni Américains ; il y aura des frères.* Elle poursuit de ses lumières la barbarie qui se cache. Partout où celle-ci, de sa voix mourante, conseille la guerre, la

[73] "If nation-states are widely conceded to be 'new' and 'historical," the nations to which they give political expression always loom out of an immemorial past, and still, more importantly, glide into a limitless future." Anderson, pp. 11-12.

[74] Ardouin, vol. 2, tome 6, p.6.

> civilisation prêche la paix ; et quand retentit le mot haine, elle répond amour. Notre pays n'est pas étranger aux idées progressives du siècle. Dieu lui crie : marche ! et, dans sa pénible ascension, nos vœux sincères l'accompagnent.[75]
>
> [Civilization is not exclusive; it attracts rather than repels. It is through civilization that the union of the human species will be brought about. *Thanks to its all-powerful influence, soon there will be neither blacks, nor whites, nor yellows, nor Europeans, nor Asians, nor Americans on Earth; there will be brothers.* With its light, it pursues barbarism wherever it hides. Wherever the later, with its dying breath, counsels war, civilization preaches peace; and when the word 'hate' rings out, it responds with "love." Our country is not a stranger to the progressive ideas of the current century. God yells to our nation: advance! And, in its tiresome ascent, our sincere wishes accompany it.]

What were readers of *Stella* to take from this highly abstracted, unspecific and rather idealized narrative of global progress? On the one hand, there is no sense, in Bergeaud, that the motor for the spread of civilization requires a colonial relationship; while the personification of civilization serves to evacuate the would-be imperial agents from the text, the association that Bergeaud returns to is "*au contact* de la civilization" ["in contact with civilization"] (Bergeaud, 248; my emphasis)[76]. If it were a question of colonization one would expect to see, following the work of Laurent Dubreuil, a discursive field or phraseologies relating to possession, not a language of contiguity and contact[77]. This might suggest, along with the text's final lines, that the spread of civilization will occur in Haiti not by an external colonizing force but by the difficult labor (*pénible*) of Haitians refusing to be excluded and elevating themselves (*ascencion*) to partake in the concert of civilized world-nations.

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[75] Bergeaud, p. 248. My emphasis.

[76] A similar association between "contact" and "civilization" is made by Ardouin. "Cependant, aujourd'hui que les haines politiques sont éteintes, que les plaies de 1802 et 1803 sont fermées, *l'Haïtien doit vivre en bonne amitié avec la France dont le contact ne peut que développer le germe de la civilisation qu'elle a déposé chez nous*. » ["However, now that our political quarrels have been stamped out, that the wounds of 1802 and 1803 have closed, *Haitians must entertain an amicable relationship with France, whose contact cannot help but develop the seed of civilization that she sowed among us.*"] Ardouin. *Etudes.* Tome 6, p.11. My emphasis.

[77] See Dubreuil, Laurent. « Chapitre 1 – Possessions (post)coloniales ». *L'empire du langage.* Paris : Hermann, 2008.

On the other hand, Bergeaud's text fails to express how Haitians are to make the transition to the quasi-messianic[78] arrival of the world-wide civilization of the future. In the end, the *futur proche* of the moment-of-writing, perhaps as much as the recent past, remains largely discursively impenetrable resulting less in a realizable praxis than in the futural orientation of a wish (*nos voeux sincères*) that may or may not be granted.

"Voilà pourquoi nous avons pris soin de ne point défigurer l'histoire »

Let me be clear. It has not been my purpose here, in this first section, to play the role of arbiter, to take the words of Bergeaud's prefatory "Avertissement," and weigh them against the narrative of *Stella* to see where imbalances and incongruities might fortuitously lie. Ever since the moment Bergeaud warned his readers that *Stella* would be an unblemished history recounted in the form of a novel, literary criticism, as we have seen, has endless circled around the question of the text's ambiguous status as if one more revolution might finally resolve the enigma. Rather, what I have attempted to do in this first section is, in the first instance, to determine, from this text which explicitly reflects upon the practices of historical and literary writing, where divisions of intellectual labor occur as well as why the disciplinary borders are erected where *Stella* places them. In the final instance, I have attempted to intuit, via an extensive catalogue of the text's proleptic and analeptic moments, the novel's sense of the ways in which time can be organized in the literary form to recount historical

[78] I am playing here on the partial secularization of Christian discourse used in describing the work of civilization in Bergeaud. The most striking examples include : omnipotence (*sa toute-puissante influence*); a message of peace (*la civilisation prêche la paix*) ; and turning the other cheek (*quand retentit le mot haine, elle répond amour.*)

events. What emerges from the analysis is, in most senses, a literary response to an increasingly positivist history. That is, a series of discursive practices that manipulate the premises upon which modern historiographic writing has been founded. Thus the appearance of the composite characters, Romulus and Rémus, "transgress" not only by omission (of the veritable Haitian actors) but by excess, representing, by their mere presence, historical elements out of *their* time. Similarly, the frequent use of prolepsis (experienced as a provisional narrative acceleration) and the strategic deployment of analepsis (to an otherwise inaccessible passé antérieur) suggest something like a coefficient of density to certain historical moments—mainly the moment of Independence and the pre-Colombian past—as well as a resistance to the practice of strict linearity in historical retelling. These are observations about history and historical time that we, as readers, are able to actualize out of *Stella* as textual object through careful analysis; in the next section we shall attempt to *historicize* this conceptual framework, that is, the historical concepts that *Stella* relies upon to understand and organize time. In doing so, we shall show that *Stella* speaks from a breach in time, caught between two fundamentally different paradigms for making sense of the course of human events.

II – Disorders in Time: A Regime at Odds

Why crisis?

We have already given several indications that the moment-of-writing in *Stella*—its narratological present—is relatively troubled. We have, as a reminder, noted that the narrator, in his backwards glance towards the events of his national

history, produces only a partial narrative of post-revolutionary events, avoiding, as it were, any allusion to domestic affairs. Yet, if the narrator's silence regarding the recent past has been much commented, few have pointed to key features of Bergeaud's text which serve as so many insinuations that his manner of apprehending time and historical events may be not be sufficient for recounting the revolution.

Given these textual features I was particularly drawn to the work of François Hartog, whose *Régimes d'historicité: Présentisme et experiences du temps* (2003) attempts to develop a conceptual framework to articulate variations in a society's understanding of historical time at moments of temporal crisis. As Hartog explains, a régime of historicity is "un outil historique, aidant à mieux appréhender, non le temps, tous les temps, ou le tout du temps, mais principalement des moments de crise du temps, ici et là, quand viennent justement, à perdre de leur évidence les articulations du passé, du présent et du futur" ["a historical tool, helping to apprehend, not time, all times, or the everything of time, but largely the moments of crisis in time, here and there, precisely when the articulations of the past, present and future lose their manifest obviousness"] (Hartog, 27). Underlying Hartog's notion of the *régime* is the idea that the three conceptual categories used to organize time—"past," "present," and "future"— are anthropological in origin, that is, they are both universal and invariable across time itself[79]. However, if the three categories are always present, Hartog argues, that is not to say, as we intuitively sense, that each society articulates their organization in the same way, or even that any given society's temporal organization

[79] Hartog, 27. In this Hartog is clearly in line with other recent theorists of conceptual historiography. Reinhart Koselleck, for example, has posited that the passage of historical time is phenomenologically intuited from the tension between two concepts which are transhistorical and anthropological in origin: a "Space of Experience," and a "Horizon of Expectation."

once established is forever immutable. Rather, what Hartog refers to as a "régime d'historicté" is the particular disposition of the transhistorical categories of a given society for a set period in time. Seen in this way, a *régime* of historicity would become not *a* but *the* condition of possibility for historical writing, operating even before the protocols of History (as a discursive discipline) establish further restrictions on the narrative (standard of proof, evacuation of the writing-subject, etc.). "Selon les rapports respectifs du présent, du passé, et du futur, certains types d'histoires sont possibles et d'autres non" ["According to the respective relationships of present, past and future, certain histories are possible and others are not"] (Hartog, 28).

Historia Magistra Vitae

Given the particular temporal complexity posed by *Stella*, any conceptual device which attempts to articulate the failure (or even the impossibility) of recounting certain histories (*Stella's* recent past) or even the sudden appearance of certain unexpected histories (the pre-Colombian past), is most certainly welcome. However, to more effectively mobilize this idea, I would first like to address the particular régime that holds a substantial place in Hartog's analysis—the *Historia Magistra*—and its particular method for mobilizing past experiences in the service of expectations of the future.

It is not altogether surprising that language and reflections surrounding the arrival of Christ would, in the West, usher in a novel way of apprehending time. According to Hartog, the resurrection of Christ changed the relationships among the transhistorical categories; producing a present that was experienced as a forward-

oriented intermediary period, the waiting room of history, between a future simultaneously opened up by Christ's ascension and closed off by his impending return[80]. In this intermediary period, the work of history was nearly essentially fulfilled, no novel events—save the ultimate history-ending Judgment—were anticipated. The German conceptual historian, Reinhart Koselleck, to whose work Hartog is directly indebted, comes to a very similar conclusion regarding this Christian understanding of time.

> As long as the Christian Doctrine of the Final Days set an immovable limit to the horizon of expectation […] *the future remained bound to the past.* Biblical revelation and Church administration had limited the tension between experience and expectation in such a way that it was not possible for them to break apart.
> Expectations that went beyond all previous experience were not related to this world. They were directed to the so-called hereafter[81].

Said another way, having short-circuited the possibility of anything new on the horizon of future events, Christianity assured a reliable certainty between what had come before and what had yet to come. It should then appear as a natural consequence that this new relationship between the metahistorical "future" and "past" reinforced a classical form of historiography—the *Historia Magistra Vitae*—which had always privileged the past as a storehouse of examples that could serve as readymade models for present and future action. According to Hartog, however, this régime, which had nevertheless shown remarkable resilience, enduring as the dominant temporal

[80] Hartog, pp. 73-4.
[81] Koselleck. *Futures Past.* p. 277. My emphasis. While the terms "horizon of expectation" and "experience" are relatively accessible in this passage, they are nevertheless nuanced and essential elements of Kosselleck's conceptual apparatus. For a more elaborate discussion of these categories see "'Space of Experience' and 'Horizon of Expectation': Two Historical Categories" in *Futures Past.*

hermeneutic from antiquity through the Christian age, was ultimately displaced by another in the wake of the French [/Haitian] Revolution.[82]

This is, in fact, what makes the voyage texts of Chateaubriand so appealing to Hartog who takes them as testaments to the failure of the *historia magistra* to articulate a history of the French Revolution and its aftermath. In a rather convincing chapter detailing Chateaubriand's two texts on his travels throughout America (*Essai historique* (1797) and *Voyage en Amérique* (1827)), Hartog places Chateaubriand within the breach in time opened up by the Revolution and outside of the reach of any known historical parallels. Hartog successfully demonstrates Chateaubriand's simultaneous reliance upon an apprehension of historical organization and usage (the *historia magistra*) and his increasing cognizance of its insufficiency to explain the course of historical events. "Le *topos* de l'*historia magistra* est devenu impossible et l'abandonner n'est pas possible, pas encore » ["The *topos* of the *historia magistra* had become impossible and yet to abandon it was not possible either, at least not yet."] (Hartog, 99).

As Aimé Césaire's *Toussaint Louverture : La révolution française et le problème colonial* (1961) ; the work of anticolonial historian Yves Benot, *La Révolution et la fin des colonies* (1987), and *Stella*[83] all make more than evident, the revolutions in France and Haiti were intimately intertwined[84]. It is within this

[82] As Hartog has noted, Koselleck also places the endpoint for the tendency to use history as exemplar to a similar period. Hartog, p. 85.
[83] "Time and time again, Bergeaud associates the Haitian Revolution with the French one." Hoffmann, *Haitian Fiction Revisited.* P. 224.
[84] For reasons that will become more clear as we proceed, I prefer intertwined to Benedict Anderson's language of transatlantic parallels to describe the advent of revolution in Haiti. Anderson, Benedict.

framework that I would like to place Bergeaud's attempt to write about the Haitian Revolution in correspondence with Hartog's reading of Chateaubriand's writings on the French Revolution. I would like to demonstrate that Bergeaud's text lays bare a tension between two contradictory modes for organizing time; one explicit, the historia magistra, and one, implicitly futural, that speaks to the inability of past events to account for the hurried course of the present. In this way, *Stella*, too speaks from something of a breach, for which the temporal irregularities we saw earlier may be the symptoms.

Stella and the Historia Magistra Vitae

Multiple readings have been offered for the Haitian Revolution's place in world history. Among them that, as the first massively successful slave revolt in the New World and the only to succeed in dispelling the transatlantic colonial machinery upon which enslavement depended, the founding of the first Black republic was an unprecedented, largely unthinkable event in history.[85] *Stella* does not, by and large, adopt this view of the Haitian Revolution in the course of world events. Rather, Bergeaud's narrator often makes use of the methods of the *Historia Magistra Vitae*—analogy, example, and historical parallel—to serve as the basis of his historical interpretation. We already possess some evidence to make this argument seem plausible; recall that the primary protagonists bear the names of the mythical founders of Rome, suggesting that the backwards glance upon the distant past can indeed be

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Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism. London: Verso, 1991. P.192.

[85] See Trouillot, Michel-Rolph. *Silencing the Past : Power and the Production of History.* "An Unthinkable History: The Haitian Revolution as Non-Event." Boston, Mass: Beacon Press, 1995.

generative, even if, as we saw, Bergeaud sought to limit the extent to which the mythic brothers of Rome should be legible as parallels.

There are, however, less ambiguous cases to be made. As a rather convincing starting point, let us take the case of the assumptions underlying the kind of instruction that Stella offers the brothers as she prepares them for the struggles to come.

> La jeune fille avait coutume d'errer le soir avec ses fidèles compagnons au bord de la rivière, plantée de bambous dont les gracieuses et gigantesques palmes mêlaient en se courbant de notes étranges aux plaintes de la brise.
> Ces promenades étaient pour les deux frères l'occasion d'apprendre une multitude de faits intéressants que leur racontait *la savante Inconnue versée dans l'histoire de tous les peuples et de tous les âges*.
> *Spartacus et d'autres noms fameux de l'Antiquité leur étaient souvent cités*. Ils se familiarisèrent ainsi de bonne heure avec *les héroïques actions des grands hommes qu'on leur proposait indirectement pour modèles*[86].
>
> [The young woman had the habit of wandering with her faithful companions at night along the bank of a river lush with the gracious and gigantic fronds of bamboo plants whose movements produced strange notes that lost themselves among the complaints of the breeze.
> For the two brothers these walks provided the opportunity to learn a multitude of interesting facts that the *wise Unknown woman, well-versed in the history of all peoples and of all ages*, recounted to them.
> *Spartacus and other famous names from antiquity were often cited to them.* They thus became familiar early on with the *heroic deeds of the great men that were indirectly presented to them as models*.]

The structure of the *Historia Magistra*, as we have explained it, should be readily apparent. Stella's divinely perfect historical knowledge of the world's peoples—the totality of *History* implicit in the repetition of *tous*—allows her to function as the ultimate storehouse of models and historical parallels for her eager pupils. And like l'Abbé Raynal who foresaw the rise of a "Black Spartacus," Stella too will explicitly turn to models taken from antiquity to inspire the brothers in their future, history-shaping actions.

[86] Bergeaud, p. 54. My emphasis.

Though not expressed as explicitly as in the case of Stella, the narrator implicitly stands by the logic of the *Historia Magistra Vitae* because he views the failures of the brothers not primarily in terms of their actions but as epistemological gaps. They simply did not have access to the historical exemplar which would have been able to guide them.

> *Dix milles hommes des anciens Grecs s'immortalisèrent par une savante retraite* ; mais, pour des troupes indisciplinées, la retraite, c'est la déroute. *Les deux frères, ignorants de l'art de la guerre, étaient peu propres à renouveler l'exploit de Xénophon*, ils se replièrent en désordre et furent poursuivis à outrance .[87]
>
> [*Ten thousand men among the Ancient Greeks achieved immortality through the wisdom of a withdrawal;* but, for undisciplined troops, retreat is defeat. *The two brothers, ignorant in the art of war, were unsuited to renew Xenophon's exploit,* they withdrew in disorder and were pursued spectacularly.]

The passage and its movement are quite clear. Unaware of the parallel between their situation and that of Xenophon, the brothers could not *repeat / renew* ("renouveler") his success. While the narrator places the force of his critique on the lack of military knowledge—opposing Xenophon's *savante* retraite to the *ignorant* brothers—it is also clear that a more complete knowledge of antiquity, such as that possessed, say by the narrator, could have avoided the haphazard retreat to which the brothers eventually succumbed. In fact, the passage is organized such that the disorderly retreat appears as the price to be exacted for the brother's ignorance.

Finally, it should be pointed out that in the order of the *Historia Magistra Vitae*, the past serves as model for present action not because two events spanning several centuries are essentially similar or identical, but rather because the underlying historical time is sufficiently structurally uniform to allow for the logic of parallel to function. Said another way, the future is expected to conform to the accumulation of

[87] Bergeaud, p.78.

past experiences. Bergeaud's narrator has an intuitive understanding of this notion which is best exemplified in his treatment of the 1791 assassinations of the insurgent free men of color Vincent Ogé and Jean-Baptiste Chavannes, which he takes to be *the* foundational moment for the Haitian Revolution.

> Le champ de la révolution commence à leur échafaud. Nous nous inclinons respectueusement en passant devant ces tombes jumelles placées au seuil de notre histoire.
> Honorons la mémoire de *deux Spartiates modernes* tous aussi vaillants tous aussi malheureux que les antiques défenseurs du célèbre défilé d'Oeta.[88]
>
> [The revolution begins at their scaffold. We respectfully lower our heads when we pass in front of these twin tombs placed at the threshold of our history.
> Let us honor the memory of these *two modern Spartans*, each as valiant and as ill-fated as the antique defenders of the famous procession of Oeta.]

The narrator has synthesized much of what we have been discussing in the surprisingly dense formulation, "deux Spartiates modernes." The narrator's concatenation of classical Spartan men with the adjective "modern," reenacts a present renewal of the past ("renouveler") that is characteristic of the *Historia Magistra* and whose logic of parallels is clearly visible in the comparative structure of the sentence.

Yet, several questions remain at this point. One, if the narrator is relating the events of the Haitian Revolution to his mid-nineteenth century readers in such a way as to have them find inspiration in the actions of the revolutionary leaders, just what is happening in the "future" of the text, or, the narrator's "present"? In other words, to which situations are we to apply these teachings? In the section that follows we will turn our attention to the ways in which the text articulates the relationship between the present and the future in an attempt to answer these questions.

[88] Bergeaud, p. 38. My emphasis.

Stella as Deborah: Complicating the Historia Magistra

I began this section by claiming that Bergeaud's text, much like Chateaubriand's recollections of his travels throughout the Americas, is placed in something of a historiographic breach, relying on one order of historicity, namely the *Historia Magistra,* even as it proved incapable or unable to articulate the unfolding of a new organization of time and history on its own. Having already briefly demonstrated the text's thinking through the problematic of the *Historia Magistra* ("renouveler"; "deux Spartiates moderns"), I must now show Bergeaud's narrator grappling with the insufficiency of this backwards glance to antiquity. One productive starting point might be to highlight the tension, from our discussion of the text's formal temporal dispositions, between the numerous examples of prolepsis (here as a specifically future-oriented vision intended to dictate action in the present) and the Historia Magistra's request that the past speak and that it guide our course of action.

Nowhere is this tension more compelling than in the chapter entitled, "Débora." "Débora" is one of only four chapters (from among the thirty-nine) that is explicitly named after an extra-textual literary or historical person ("Romulus et Rémus," "Débora," "Rochambeau," and, if we permit the nominalization, "Machiavélisme colonial").[89] Yet, unlike the other historical actors in this relatively privileged group, the provenance of the name "Débora" is not immediately transparent. The chapter's place in the narrative is equally unlikely to offer substantive contextual clues:

[89] Three other chapters refer to a specific historical actor but do so only in the language of periphrasis and thus require an existing knowledge of Haitian Revolutionary history for proper identification ("Le pacifacteur," relates Sonthonax's arrival in Saint-Domingue and the chapters "Gouvernement du Capitaine-Général" and "La Mort du Capitaine-Général," discuss the successes and failures of the French expeditionary forces under Charles Leclerc.)

"Débora" recounts the events that took place following Sonthonax's declaration of general emancipation [1793] when pro-Republican, revolutionary forces sought to defend French Saint-Domingue from a Royalist-supported British invasion and an attack from Spanish-owned Santo-Domingo. So, the question remains, who then was this eponymous Débora? Halfway through the short chapter, the narrator clarifies the reference:

> Ils [les frères] allèrent à la montagne offrir à Stella les prémices de leurs succès, et s'inspirer encore de ses conseils.
> La jeune fille, assise à l'ombre du palmier de la grotte, les reçut avec joie. Elle symbolisait la sagesse dont tous ses discours exhalaient le céleste parfum : c'était Déborah la prophétesse de l'Ecriture, sur la montagne d'Ephraïm.[90]
>
> [They [the brothers] went to the mountain to offer up to Stella the intimation of their success and to seek inspiration in her counsel.
> The young woman, seated in the shadow of the palm tree in the cave, greeted them with joy. She symbolized the wisdom, the celestial scent, exhaled by each of her pronouncements: it was Deborah the prophetess of Scripture on the mountain of Ephraim.]

Just as I argued that the brothers Romulus and Rémus are to be read as vital contradictions that are both the mythic founders of Rome, and their reactualizations, that succeed in avoiding the founding fratricide that they nevertheless signify, Stella, the text suggests, should be approached as the Israeli prophetess from the Old Testament, Débora. In one sense, the influence of the *Historia Magistra* is strongly felt; the narrator has identified an example from the writings of history upon which to project Stella's undaunted prophetic speech and allowed her to bring it to life once more, allowing the past to reactualize itself as present in the present.

The passage contains a more subtle example of this superposition in the guise of a seemingly inconsequential detail, the site of Débora's prophecy: "assise à l'ombre du palmier de la grotte" ["seated in the shadow of the palm tree in the cave"]. Readers

[90] Bergeaud, p. 106.

would not be misguided in wanting to read this palm tree in the mode of Haitian national symbols, as the text itself has previously instructed its readers to do.

> Parmi les arbres qui croissaient à l'entrée de la grotte, se distinguait un palmier, orgueilleux et fier de sa souveraineté naturelle. La victoire en a fait depuis un symbole. Pareil au chêne appelé royal pour avoir servi d'asile à un monarque vaincu, le palmier, tente glorieuse d'un peuple vainqueur, a été nommé *l'arbre de la liberté* ; consécration immortelle du droit le plus sacré de l'homme, par une des plus nobles productions de la nature.[91]
>
> [Among the trees that grew in the entrance to the cave, one palm tree stood out, proud and self-satisfied in its natural sovereignty. Victory has since made of it a symbol. Just as the oak is called royal for having served as the asylum to a vanquished monarch, the palm tree, glorious tent of a victorious people, has been named *the tree of liberty*; immortal consecration of the most sacred right of man, by one of the most noble productions of nature.]

Through a personification of the narratologically extent palm tree ("orgueilleux et fier") and a historical parallel that erects a genealogy[92] for the appropriation of flora in the national symbolic, the passage clearly seeks to address the question of how the palm tree came to stand in for the Haitian revolutionary struggles. Yet, what remains noteworthy in the mention of the palm tree under which Débora [Stella] sat is that it is not only a symbol of national struggle but that it also, simultaneously, a symbol which embeds Débora [Stella] in the time of the Old Testament, literally placing her out of her own time and bringing her prophetic council to bear on the events shaping Revolutionary Atlantic history. Let us now briefly turn to the biblical story of Débora.

The fourth chapter of the Book of Judges recounts the tale of the submission of the children of Israel under the rule of the powerful Sisera and his nine hundred chariots of iron. Deborah was a deeply respected prophetess and judge who, in rejoining Bergeaud's account, "dwelt under the palm tree of Deborah, between Ramah

[91] Bergeaud, p. 87. Original emphasis.

[92] At this point we should not be greatly surprised to find the use of periphrasis and omission to address the Oak tree in which King Charles II hid after the Battle of Worcester in 1651.

and Bethel in mount Ephraim" (Judges 4: 4-5). After a sudden revelation, Deborah commands the Isreali warrior Barak to go out with ten thousand men and to challenge the forces of Sisera, promising him a victory that she has foreseen. Barak accepts, but only upon the condition that Deborah accompany his men. In doing so, the warrior-prophet Deborah and Stella's valiant classical alter-ego of Pallas Athena overlap once more[93]. Following a lengthy battle, Sisera is ultimately defeated by another woman, Jael, who, in pretending to offer the former ruler safe haven, strikes a nail into his skull. The tale of Deborah, then, is the story of a deeply respected female figure, who, in using the gift of prophecy, is able to aid the community of the oppressed overcome their submission through divinely sanctioned violent struggle. It is little wonder, then, that Bergeaud's narrator briefly superposes Débora onto Stella.

These may well be interesting and under-commented connections but why linger at such lengths on such an ephemeral reference that, like the mention of Pallas Athena, occurs only once? Consider for a moment that at this precise point in the text, Rémus and Romulus (as marked absences of the mythic Roman founders) are seeking council from an Israeli prophetess about how to wage an asymmetric war. Reading this scene in light of Dubreuil's literary response to literary history, the juxtaposition of Romulus [Louverture and not Louverture], Rémus [Rigaud and not Rigaud] and Débora [Stella, Pallas Athena, "liberté"] within the pages of *Stella* suggests a reconfiguration of the time in which the Historia Magistra is only felicitous on the condition of its disruption.

[93] « Aux armes, aux armes !!! Le cri de guerre ce fut Stella qui le poussa. Placée à l'entrée du camp, la lance à la main, la poitrine découverte, les cheveux au vent, elle représentait et personnifiait la Pallas antique ». ["At arms, at arms !!! It was Stella who let out the battle cry. Placed at the entrance to the camp, a lance at her side, her chest uncovered, her hair bellowing in the wind, she represented and personified Pallas of antiquity."] Bergeaud, p.66.

For at this moment of the novel, the figures of the "past" (from which the exemplars have been taken to guide future action) are both "past" (for the purposes of the Historia Magistra) and "present" as well as present to one another in the time of the novel.

If, as Hartog notes, nineteenth-century scientific historical inquiry takes as its postulate the sharp distinction between the past and the present that makes historical writing possible (Hartog, 99), Bergeaud's narrator, like Chateaubriand, cannot but see the past that continues to linger tenaciously into the present. And in superposing these figures from the ancient past onto those of the novel's temporality, we cannot, but feel, as Hartog notes, cross-temporal contaminations. "Mais, juxtaposer deux dates, ou plutôt les superposer, c'est exprimer à la fois leur écart, leur impossible coïncidence et les rapprocher l'une de l'autre : renvoyer de l'une à l'autre, produire un effet de réverbération, de contamination » ["But to juxtapose two dates, or rather, to superpose them, is to express not only their distance, their impossible coincidence, but brings one closer to the other : it refers one to the other, producing an effect of reverberation, of contamination"] (Hartog, 100). This is why we cannot take Bergeaud at his word when he asks us to read Romulus and Rémus as mere narrative shells.

Yet, if the search for these ideal historical exemplars seems indebted to the order of the *Historia Magistra*, we cannot ignore, I would argue, the fact that *Stella's* narrative momentum is consistently provided by the future, which functions like a tow cable, pulling it ever-forward. Débora may have come from the warehouse of history, but it was her vision of the *future* which gave confidence to Barak, just as it Stella's revelation of the future that brings solace to the brothers despite the forces of Le

Colon, and the proleptic jumps of the narrator assure readers that vengeance will one day eventually come to those who physically abused their slaves. In all cases, then, it is a vision of the future which inspires action in the present: *fight Sisera; vanquish Le Colon; continue reading despite your anger*! Read in this way, the case of Débora, strongly suggests a tension between the backwards glance of the *Historia Magistra* and forward-oriented apprehensions of time evident in the models of "clairvoyance," "prophecy," and narrative prolepsis.

Unlike Chateaubriand, who remained unable to move beyond the regime of the *Historia Magistra*, Toqueville, another traveler of the young America, Hartog argues, was one of the first to be able to articulate a new disposition of temporal categories that would allow him to describe what he saw in America. "En somme, Tocqueville retourne (mais en conserve la forme) le schéma de l'historia magistra : la leçon vient désormais du futur et non plus du passé » ["In short, Tocqueville turned the schema of the historia magistra around (while conserving its form) : the lesson now comes from the future and no longer from the past."] (Hartog, 106). Seen in this light, it is rather interesting, then, that the narrator, who seems so adept at prolepsis and having Stella articulate the future within the reassuring voice of prophecy, cannot himself turn the *Historia Magistra* on its head as he lacks any specific referent to the post-revolutionary future. While an avoidance of the narrator's present and future could be simply taken as an evasion of the unpleasantries of early nineteenth-century Haitian political life, it also begs the question, I would argue, of where Haitians could possibly look for models of their future. Which is not, of course, to say that such a narrative is impossible; one work in particular succeeds in recounting the tale of the Haitian

Revolution while simultaneously articulating a concrete vision of the future that would follow Dessalines' proclamation.

Pétion's Visions of the Future : L'Haïtiade

In his 1914 review of *Stella* in the journal *L'essor scientifique et littéraire*, the critic Hénec Dorsinville argued, in what should now be a familiar gesture, that *Stella* had been wholly misunderstood and misclassified by his predecessors.

> Le livre de Mr. Bergeaud n'a pas été compris de la critique haïtienne. Dans le sens vrai du mot, *Stella* n'est pas un roman. Moins le rythme des vers et l'assonance des rimes, cette œuvre est un poème épique, cousin de la main gauche des poèmes de Homère, […] et, pour être local, de l'*Haïtiade*, cette brune fille de nos vallons, dont on ne connait pas le père[94].
>
> [Mr. Bergeaud's book has not been understood by Haitian critics. In the real sense of the word, *Stella* is not a novel. Lacking only the rhythm of its verses and the assonance of its rhymes, this work is an epic poem, closely related to the poems of Homer, […], and to be local, to the *Haïtiade*, the brown girl of our vales, whose father remains unknown.]

The assertion that there was some significant association between the seemingly extraordinary events of the Haitian Revolution (as well as texts seeking to relate them) and the epic poetry of antiquity is older than Dorsinville's well-treaded critique. It can be heard in the opening lines of the poem, "L'épopée des Aïeux," by the nineteenth century Haitian poet, Oswald Durand. "Ecoutez, écoutez, c'est une autre Iliade./ Elle eut son noir Achille et son Agamemnon».[95] ["Hear ye, hear ye, it is another Iliad. / It has its black Achilles and its Agamemnon."] Continuing in the tradition, Anne Marty, who prefaced the 2009 edition of *Stella*, hears the epic echoes not of Homer's *Iliad* but of Virgil's *Aeneid*. "[Bergeaud] s'est appuyé sur le pastiche d'une précédente épopée

[94] Dorsinville, Hénec. "Romans et romanciers haïtiens : *Stella*, par Eméric Bergeaud ». *L'essor scientifique et littéraire.* Port-au-Prince: Imp. Verrolot, Juin 1914. P. 611.
[95] Durand, Oswald. Ed. Pradel Pompilus. *Poèmes choisis.* Port-au-prince: Imprimerie des Antilles, 1964. P. 51

fondatrice, *L'Enéide* du poète romain, Virgile. Et il parvient à faire du récit de la libération des esclaves et du pays une merveilleuse épopée » ["Bergeaud drew upon the pastiche of a pre-existing founding epic, *The Aeneid* by the roman poet, Virgil."] (Bergeaud, 10). Yet *Stella*'s inscription within a genealogy of epic poetry is suggested by no less than the text itself ; the first chapter, « Saint-Domingue » begins with an epigraph taken from the opening lines of Lord Byron's *The Bride of Abydos* (1813) and ends with a brief quotation taken from Virgil's *Georgics* (29 B.C.E.), several of whose lines appear again in the *Aeneid*[96]. The text is thus 'configuring,' to borrow from Dubreuil, a particular kind of reading.

If, as Dorsinville asserts, *Stella* is, at its core, an epic poem in everything but poetic convention («Moins le rythme des vers, et l'assonance des rimes"), its textual cousin, the suggestively titled *L'Haïtiade: poème épique en huit chants* (1827) to which Dorsinville alludes, appears to make both its literary ancestry and formal conceits transparent to the potential reader. While *L'Haïtiade*, like *Stella*, limits its narrative scope to the events of the Haitian Revolution, it opts to recast them in the classically-venerated alexandrine verse set into rhyming couplets. Though much of what has been said about *L'Haïtiade* concerns its anonymous publication—indeed as Dorsinville's own comment makes clear this problem had still not been resolved by 1914—the 1945 version of the text, edited by Jean Brierre, attributes the poem to a

[96] The citation (in the original Latin) taken from Virgil's *Georgics* is translated by Bergeaud only as an endnote.

Bordelais lawyer, the Baron Desquiron de Saint-Agnan who had met Isaac Louverture while he was working on the *Mémoires sur la vie de Toussaint Louverture*[97].

L'Haïtiade's underlying premise is that secular history alone cannot account for the events of the Haitian Revolution. Instead, the world of *L'Haïtiade*, unlike that of *Stella*, is populated and focalized through supernatural actors taken from Christian mythology and takes place across interpenetrating sacred and profane planes. Within the pages of the text, angels will address historical actors (Toussaint, Pétion), take the form of humans (Ogé), even going so far as to temper God's wrath when he sets out to destroy the French fleet out of a belief that the Leclerc Expedition of 1802 was intended to reinstate slavery in Saint-Domingue. Fallen angel that he is, Satan too is present and eager to use the revolution's bloodshed to amass souls. None of which is to say that the more-familiar, "secular" account of events is absent; the central "plot" of the revolution is indeed legible—from Ogé's rebellion to Vertières—only that it is obviously transformed when the telos of the revolution takes as "liberty" a right which is assured and maintained by the actions of the divine.

Of more immediate concern to us at this moment, however, is the way in which *L'Haïtiade* reconfigures the relationship between the present and the future. More specifically, we could say that unlike *Stella*, *L'Haïtiade* is able to bring insights from throughout the nineteenth-century to bear on the actions of the Haitian revolutionaries, thus bypassing Bergeaud's near-total silence on the events of post-Independence Haiti.

[97] Desquiron de Saint-Agnan. Ed. Jean F. Brierre. *L'Haïtiade*. Port-au-Prince : Imprimerie de l'Etat, 1945. P. 191. For a complete account of the debates surrounding the determination of the text's author see : Large, Camille. "Historique du poème" in *L'Haitiade.* Pp. 179-197.

This is perhaps best seen in a crucial moment of the eighth and final chant when the now-deceased Toussaint Louverture appears before the war-weary Alexandre Pétion.

La nuit d'un voile sombre avait couvert les cieux,
Le sage Pétion veillait silencieux,
Et déplorait les maux de sa triste patrie.
Le sommeil vint fermer sa paupière flétrie ;
Un charme tout puissant enchaîna ses esprits,
Et Toussaint vint s'offrir à ses regards surpris.[98]

[The night, shrouded in a somber veil, covered the heavens,
The wise Pétion looked on silently,
And deplored the sorrows of his unfortunate homeland.
Sleep came and closed his withered eyelids:
An all-powerful charm bound his mind,
And Toussaint appeared before his surprised gazes.]

Toussaint's death places this encounter somewhere in the brief interval between the end of April 1803 and the eventual surrender of the French military forces following the Battle of Vertières in December of the same year. But, Toussaint quickly clarifies his sudden apparition; he did not appear to Pétion simply to offer him solace during the most-brutal stages of General Rochambeau's war of near-extermination, but retakes a mortal form as a messenger for no less than the Divine. Speaking to Pétion, the spectral Toussaint states:

Cesse de t'alarmer, dit-il, un Dieu puissant
Etend son bras divin sur ce peuple naissant ; […]
Il veut que je t'éclaire et qu'en ton souvenir
Je grave en traits de feu les faits de l'avenir[99].

[Cease to be alarmed, he said, a powerful God
extends his divine arm on this emerging people; […]
He wants me to enlighten you and in your memory
to engrave in burning brushstrokes the facts the future holds.]

It would be tempting to read Toussaint's message in the register of the comforting visions of the future seen either in Stella's prophecy or of the narrator's

[98] Desquiron, pp. 144-5. My emphasis.
[99] Desquiron, p. 145.

prolepsis, that allow their intended audience, in this case, Pétion, to rush past the difficult periods of revolutionary struggle to the moments of their eventual resolution ("cesse de t'alarmer"). Yet to do so ignores the shift that Toussaint effectuates in the affective plane. Unlike the assumed joy which is to follow Stella's literal apotheosis at the moment of Dessalines' Proclamation of Independence[100], by reaching further into the nineteenth century and recounting the difficulties of establishing a state upon the still smoldering ashes of Saint-Domingue's colonial and slave dependent political and economic structures, Toussaint's visions of the future offer a more ambivalent account of the spoils that accompany Independence. No sooner has Toussaint revealed the liberation of Haiti from among France's overseas possessions—"Haïti resté libre attend un sort prospère" ["Haiti, now free awaits a prosperous destiny"] (Desquiron, 146)—than he divulges the post-Revolutionary dangers faced by the Haitian citizenry from among the ranks of its own military leadership. "Les Noirs retrouveront dans leurs libérateurs/ des bourreaux, des tyrans et des usurpateurs" ["Blacks will find in their liberators / executioners, tyrants, usurpers"] (146). This alone was likely a troubling fact. Beyond Dessalines' warning that the nefarious effects of colonialism had not ended at the moment of independence, the spectral Toussaint gave voice to the fear that the structures of oppression were not reducible to color and that a companion in chains today, might be an enemy tomorrow (see, for example, his serious criticisms of Dessalines and Christophe). It also had the chilling

[100] « Je suis la liberté, étoile des nations ! Chaque fois que vous lèverez les yeux au ciel, vous me verrez ». ["I am liberty, the guiding star of nations ! Each time that you raise your eyes to the sky, you will see me."] Bergeaud, p. 237.

effect of calling into question an inherent morality gleaned from the suffering of the ineffable horrors of racial discrimination and enslavement.

Through Toussaint, Pétion is able to glimpse into an accelerated account of the major events of Haitian political life that spanned the period from the Proclamation of Independence (1804) to the possibility of an eventual recognition of this Independence by France a few decades later. Though brief, Toussaint's divine synopsis is relatively thorough including the rise to power (and subsequent assassination) of Jean-Jacques Dessalines[101], the division of Haiti into two separate political states including Henri Christophe's Northern Kingdom[102], Pétion's own death[103], Christophe's suicide amidst the rise of popular resentment in the North[104], the reunification of the Haitian people under one state[105], and the seemingly imminent normalization of political relations with France[106]. As the first rays of morning light fall upon the slumbering Pétion, he awakens to find that the dream, like any lingering doubt of his eventual military victory over the French, has been dispelled.

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[101] « L'heure sonne, et le fer de ses propres guerriers/ a frappé le tyran qui flétrit leurs lauriers ». ["Time beckons, and the iron of his own warriors,/ has struck the tyrant that debases their laurels."] Desquiron, p.146.

[102] "Christophe va régner sur le Nord d'Haïti ». ["Christophe will reign over the North of Haiti."] Desquiron, p. 147.

[103] « Ce moment expiré, tu quitteras la vie. » ["And this moment expired, your life will end."] Desquiron, p. 147.

[104] « Il saisit dans ses mains un instrument de mort,/ en presse sans pâlir le mobile ressort ». ["In his hands he grasped the instrument of death/ applying pressure to the mobile spring without growing pale."] Desquiron, p. 147.

[105] « Deux peuples divisés se rapprochent unis ; / à la voix d'un héros les traîtres sont punis ; / Haïti n'offre plus qu'une même et seule famille ». ["Two divided people come together, united; / at the voice of a hero the traitors are punished; / Haiti is now made up of one and the same family."] Desquiron, p. 149.

[106] « Il n'est pas loin le jour où ce doyen des rois [Louis XVIII]/ des peuples d'Haïti consacrera les droits ;/ et consultant sa gloire autant que sa prudence,/ applaudira lui-même à votre indépendance ». ["The day is not far when the doyen of the kings [Louis XVIII] / of the people of Haiti will consecrate the rights; / and heeding counsel from his glory and his prudence,/ will himself applaud your independence."] Desquiron, p. 149.

At this point my reasons for selecting *L'Haïtiade* as a counterpoint to *Stella* should be relatively clear. While Toussaint's visions mirror Stella's prophecies of the conclusion of the Haitian Revolutionary War in their futural orientations and temporal accelerations, it is also clear that the vast weight of Toussaint's pronouncements stress, not the Revolution, but the hardships of the early Haitian state that would follow. Furthermore, given the year in which *L'Haïtiade* was first anonymously published (1827), it is rather stunning that Toussaint cites, as we have seen, so many specific early nineteenth-century events of Haitian history and, though Toussaint falsely attributes the eventual recognition of Independence to Louis XVIII rather than to his successor, Charles X, the intimation of this moment in 1825 makes Toussaint's timeline rather comprehensive up to the moment of the text's publication[107].

The same, as we have said, is not true in the case of *Stella*. Neither Stella, who appears to lack access to events that will come after her ascension in 1804, nor the narrator who has only partial access to international events of the 1810s or a vision of an unspecified, eventless future can articulate what resides in the historical penumbras of postcolonialism. Given Toussaint's relatively exhaustive historical catalogue, and the additional twenty-two years separating the publication dates of these two texts, it is all the more surprising that a text such as *Stella*, which relies so consistently on prolepsis and prophecy, could not draw upon one event between 1804 and 1859 to inspire either its protagonists or its readers.

[107] For more on the wildly unpopular Ordinance of April 17, 1825 that recognized the independence of the government of the "French part of Saint-Domingue," issued by Charles X including the ordinance itself, see "Chapter XII" in Léger, J.N. *Haiti, Her History, and Her Detractors.* New York: The Neale Publishing Company, 1907.

Toussaint's illumination of the future to guide Pétion should not, however, lead us to believe that *L'Haïtiade* has definitively abandoned the model of the *Historia Magistra* in favor of its inverted, future-oriented successor. Examples taken from the throughout the course of history, as the very name of the work proclaims, remain a powerful heuristic tool for interpreting the present or more recent past. And just as Stella-as-Débora succeeded in removing the opaque veil placed upon the knowledge of the future, so too did the deceased Toussaint return to parlay divine messages of the still-to-come, suggesting that in *L'Haïtiade*, as in *Stella*, there are lingering tensions about where (and from whom) illumination from the future may originate.

III – Stella *as a Fiction of National Foundation*

Up until now we have not seriously engaged with the idea that *Stella* (or *L'Haïtiade* for that matter) is a "foundational fiction," in the proper sense of the term as elaborated by the scholarship on nineteenth-century Latin American literature undertaken by Doris Sommer. But, to the extent that *Stella* aims to recount, as Bergeaud notes in his prefatory remarks, the "laborieux enfantement d'une société nouvelle" ["laborious delivery of a new society"] (19), we can legitimately attempt to read the narrative threads of *Stella* and see how the relatively restricted cast of characters envisions the forces that bind the collective agency and belonging that would lead to the foundation of the new nation. That is, we can ask not only how *Stella* imagines the community that forms the nascent nation but how the novel figures the disunions that frustrate national cohesion. In addition to Doris Sommer and Benedict Anderson—whose work seems crucial to articulating foundational

nationalisms—I will also turn to Sibylle Fischer who has already borrowed Sommer's concept of the "foundational fiction," in the context of *juridical* fictions of Haitian foundation. In so doing, I would like to show that *Stella*, the (sometimes) foundational fiction of the Haitian novelistic cannon, strongly suggests that Anderson's history of modular nationalism cannot account for the *black* "Creole" nationalism on which the Haitian nation was founded[108].

For the unfamiliar, Doris Sommer's now classic *Foundational Fictions: the National Romances of Latin America* (1991), argues that many nineteenth-century novels throughout decolonized Latin America were national romances. In these romances—which Sommer asks us to understand in the sense of an *allegorical* tale of love—the couple is composed of lovers which each descend from heterogeneous (and previously rival) segments of society[109]. Read in this way, each amorous encounter as with each romantic setback signifies not only at the level of the individual couple, but speaks to the process by which the interpellation of national belonging comes to be negotiated among a nation's diverse communities.

In a rather clever reworking of Sommer's terminology, Sibylle Fischer, in her book, *Modernity Disavowed: Haiti and the Cultures of Slavery in the Age of Revolution* (2004), has produced a noteworthy analysis of the early Haitian

[108] In her *Beyond the Slave Narrative* (2011), Deborah Jenson has briefly argued for the limitations of the Andersonian account of nationalism to explain Haiti's postcolonial Black Nationalism. Her account, however, privileges "mediated" or "kidnapped" narratives as the form which would represent a "different kind of Creole pioneer." Instead, I remain within the realm of the literary (and in particular, the novel), to respond to Anderson's notable absence on the question of Black Nationalism. See in particular, Jenson, Deborah. *Beyond the Slave Narrative: Politics, Sex, and Manuscripts in the Haitian Revolution.* Liverpool: University of Liverpool Press, 2011. pp. 217-220.

[109] Sommer, Doris. *Foundational Fictions of Latin America : The National Romances of Latin America.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991. P. 14.

Constitutions as "fantasies of statehood" or rather, properly foundational fictions[110] deserving of careful readings. Fischer argues that unlike the Spanish American romances studied by Sommer, the Haitian Constitutions do not rely upon on a dual-allegorical framework of heterosexual desire and national reconciliation, but a "patriarchal clan," standing in for the state itself[111]. In particular, Fischer argues that the tension in the nineteenth century Haitian legal texts is not one of various, diverse national constituencies but one between the national imaginary (built upon the notion of personal liberty) and the realities of the state (seemingly dependant on forced labor)[112]. However, when Fischer turns her attention to nineteenth-century Haitian literature (including *Stella*), she finds that narrative literature simply does not address questions of the Haitian state. This may help to explain how the Michel-Rolph Trouillot inspired Fischer came to read the tension between the black Romulus and the mulatto Rémus in *Stella* as secondary, not in the sense of being allegorical referents for the disjuncture between the nation's black and mulatto populations, but as the ideological displacement of the truly ineffable tension between the Haitian nation and its state apparatus that could not be addressed in narrative literature.[113]

If, as Sommer has suggested in speaking on Latin American texts, that "in these sentimental epics, one meaning doesn't merely point to another, unreachably sublime register; it depends on the other. The romantic affair *needs* the nation and erotic frustrations *are* challenges to national development" (Sommer, 50), then it becomes

[110] Fischer, Sibylle. *Modernity Disavowed : Haiti and the Cultures of Slavery in the Age of Revolution*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2004. P. 229.
[111] Fischer, p. 268.
[112] Fischer, p. 270.
[113] Fischer, p. 270.

clear in the case of *Stella*, which contains no scenes of lasting or even limited erotic frustration between its male protagonists and the eponymous Stella, that *Stella*, as I have read it, and as Fischer herself notes, does not conform to Sommer's "allegorical," notion of heterosexual desire and national interpellation.[114]

Revisiting the moment in the novel when the brothers first come into contact with Stella will make the evacuation of romantic sentiment quite clear. Romulus and Rémus first happen upon Stella during the raid on Le Colon's lavish mansion which they undertook in order to avenge the murder of their mother, Marie, under Le Colon's orders. Discovering her among the flames they have set to the mansion, and taking her to be the daughter of Le Colon, the brothers seize Stella with the intention of executing her at their campsite as the cost to be exacted for the death of their mother. Yet, at the moment when the machete is raised, Stella confounds the brothers with her physical splendor. « Tant de beauté frappe les deux frères, les éblouit, les fascine. Ils se regardent l'un l'autre et cherchent à s'exciter; l'hésitation et le trouble se décèlent dans tous leurs mouvements. Ils s'approchent davantage, leur embarras augmente. Ils veulent frapper, et l'arme s'échappe de leurs mains » ["Such beauty strikes the two brothers, dazzles them, fascinates them. They look at each other and grow excited; hesitation and distress can be detected in their movements. As they move closer to her, their difficulty grows. They want to strike but the weapon falls from their hands"] (Bergeaud, 51). So, while we might initially read this as a scene of clumsy late

[114] I have chosen to place the word allegorical in quotation marks to highlight the idiosyncratic definition that Sommer ascribes to allegory. For more on her concept of the allegory, which is something of an allegorical dialectic, see "Love and Country : An Allegorical Speculation," in Chapter 1: "An Irresistible Romance".

adolescent desire and indeed, it would be difficult not to, the text does not allow Stella to occupy the structural position of the heterosexual object of desire for long.

The original intent of the murderous plot (*let us kill this girl that our mother might be avenged*) suggests the place that Stella will come to occupy. Lamenting their status as orphans to the newly freed Stella, the brothers state the depths of their lack, "Un seul être nous aimait: c'était notre mère; le Colon l'a tuée. Cette amie perdue ne se retrouvera plus. On n'a jamais qu'une mère » ["Only one being loved us: it was our mother; the Colon has killed her. This lost friend will never be found again. One only ever has but one mother"](Bergeaud, 52). Yet Stella will almost immediately counter this assertion of the uniqueness of motherly love by offering to stand alongside the brothers not as a potential lover but as their *mother*. "Comptez donc sur un sentiment susceptible de *remplacer* à l'avenir *tout l'amour de votre mère*" ["Then rely on a feeling that is likely *to replace* in the future *all of your mother's love*"] (Bergeaud, 53, emphasis mine). So, while Stella may initially have been perceived as a sexual object of desire, she is quickly recast as the stern maternal figure of guidance and counsel that we have seen elsewhere. At no point in the novel is the narrative arrested by erotic frustrations between Stella and the brothers which must be overcome (for the benefit of the nation); that the central focus of the novel could not be the unification of a couple is evident from the sole female protagonist's ascension into heaven at the conclusion of the novel. It is thus relatively easy to side with Fischer and claim that Sommer's framework of the "foundational fiction," dependant as it is on the interconnected nature of heterosexual desire and national belonging, is ultimately

rather limiting in our case and is unable to account for the ways in which *Stella* might provide an account of nationalism.

Yet, if lovers' quarrels have no place in *Stella*, the same cannot be said of the fraternal squabbles between the black Romulus and the mulatto Rémus (which appears at the most obvious cleavage in the heterogeneous composition of the Haitian national community and which is one that would no doubt have struck Bergeaud writing during the violent reign of Emperor Faustin Soulouque.) As we have seen, Fischer does away with this narrative of colorist tension by figuring it as the displacement of the (unspoken) tension between the Haitian state and the national imaginary "absent" in nineteenth century narrative literature. While it would take a deliberate misreading of *Stella* to read it primarily as a novel of "state against nation," rather than as a narrative of the union of both branches of the black race, Fischer misspeaks in stating that such concerns are wholly absent from the novel or from narrative literature more generally. Are not such concerns implicit, and indeed, do they not form the very heart of the narrator's criticism of Romulus' [Toussaint's] Rural Code [of 1801]?

> Un grand nombre de décisions furent prises, de lois publiées, d'arrêtés et de règlements mis en vigueur sous l'inspiration de ce mauvais génie de Romulus [Toussaint]. *Il fut l'auteur du fameux système rural établi à cette époque, et qui ne différa de l'esclavage que par le nom*.[115]
>
> [A great number of decisions had been made, laws published, decrees and regulations placed into effect under the inspiration of the erroneous genius of Romulus [Toussaint]. *He was the author of the famous rural system that was established at this time and which differed from slavery in name only.*]

Though this particular historical moment happens to precede the eventual 1804 Proclamation of Independence, it does highlight the already extent economic challenges posed to the agriculture-dependent state by the realities of general

[115] Bergeaud, p. 138. My emphasis.

emancipation. That Toussaint could not solve this problem without resorting to re-enslavement of the population by means of his Rural Code is an acknowledgement of the very tension Fischer claims absent in this text[116].

Stella's Imagined Communities

According to the history of the rise and spread of Nationalism offered by Benedict Anderson's deservedly famous, *Imagined Communities* (1983), Nationalism—understood not only in the sense of a shared interpellation within a specific region but, perhaps more importantly, as the tenacious affective bonds that at times induce self-sacrificial action—is a modular, malleable and uniquely modern institution. In Anderson's narrative the institution took on four stages as it swept through the post-Enlightenment world: the first instantiation—what he calls the "Creole Nationalisms"—gives an account of the New World Independence movements of North and South America; the second, working off the models provided by their transatlantic counterparts, were the European bourgeois nationalisms which emerged in the advent of the standardization of print languages; these, in turn, helped to foment the development of mid-nineteenth century Official, or Imperial, nationalisms as (previously polyvernacular) dynastic seats of power sought to reinsert themselves into the imagined communities of the popular movements; finally, the "Last Wave" of Nationalism saw the rise of anticolonial nationalisms emerging,

[116] The rift between the Haitian national imaginary and the forms its state would take following independence may not, admittedly, have been a central focus of Haiti's early narrative literature, true, but it is another thing to suggest that these texts are either unaware of, or dramatically fail to, note this tension at all.

primarily in Africa and Asia, among young colonized functionaries whose bound administrative and educational pilgrimages allowed them to imagine new nations.

In this third and final section I would like to show that, because of the requisite linear development of Anderson's modular nationalism, and the way in which Anderson has framed New World, so-called 'Creole,' nationalisms, the case of Haiti is particularly difficult to articulate in this historical narrative. Furthermore, I would like to argue that taking *Stella* as a fiction of the foundation of Haiti may be helpful in articulating alternative forms and temporalities in which black (Haitian) nationalism might have developed.

At first glance it would seem that Haiti, being among the New World nations that emerged in the period between 1760 and 1830 should find a definitive place in Anderson's argument on the development of Creole Nationalisms. However, from the opening definition Anderson provides of the "Creole states" of the New World, he appears to implicitly exclude discussion of Haiti.

> Whether we think of Brazil, the USA, or the former colonies of Spain, language was not an element that differentiated them from their respective imperial metropoles. All including the USA, were creole states, *formed and led by people who shared a common language and common descent with those against whom they fought.*[117]

While we could point to the relatively minor fact that Haiti—unlike Brazil, the United States, or the former colonies of Spain—was a former possession of the *French* (who appear mysteriously absent in this implied overview of imperial European powers), the crux of the matter, in my eyes, lies in the fact that creole states, for Anderson, are states in which language and ancestry are shared with the metropole. Given the preponderant role that the transatlantic slave trade and slave labor held in

[117] Anderson, p. 47. Emphasis mine.

shaping the demography of French colonial Saint-Domingue, it could not be argued that Haiti, whose citizenry was, or descended primarily from, enslaved Africans, shared the linguistic or genealogical alliances characteristic of the other "creole states."[118]

It would be relatively generous (though quite unsatisfying) to state that Anderson's analytical apparatus, defining "creole" as it has, makes no place for Haiti among these early nationalisms and look elsewhere. The problem, however, is that though appearing primarily as fleeting or footnoted mentions, Haiti and the Haitian Revolution *do* appear and must then be reconciled within Anderson's own account. What cognitive acrobatics are required, for example, to read Anderson's characterization of the New World revolutionary wars *while simultaneously* keeping the case of Haiti in mind?

> They also illuminate two peculiar features of the revolutionary wars that raged in the New World between 1776 and 1825. […] On the other hand, although these wars caused a great deal of suffering and were marked by much barbarity, in an odd way the stakes were rather low. *Neither in North nor in South America did the creoles have to fear physical extermination or reduction to servitude, as did so many other peoples who got in the way of the juggernaut of European imperialism. They were after all 'whites', Christians, and Spanish or English speakers.*[119]

It hardly bears repeating that the stakes of the Haitian Revolution were indeed high; colonial retention of Saint-Domingue would have meant, in the best of cases, the re-enslavement of a vast proportion of the population, and, in the worst case, as

[118] The strictly Europeanized nature of Creoles is a persistent and important component of the argument. "If the Indigenes were conquerable by arms and disease, and controllable by the mysteries of Christianity and a completely alien culture […], the same was not true of the creoles, who had virtually the same relationship to arms, disease, Christianity and European culture as the metropolitans. In other words, in principle, they had readily at hand the political, cultural and military means for successfully asserting themselves." Anderson, p. 58.

[119] Anderson, p. 191. Emphasis mine.

Rochambeau suggested, a clean slate brought about by a military policy of racial extermination.

Part of the problem, aside from excluding Haitians from among the Creoles that were legible as such in his analysis, may arise from the fact that Anderson may not see their acts of military and political resistance as properly *revolutionary*. The greatest textual support for this notion can be taken from a footnote on the page directly following his description of the characteristics of the Creole revolutionary wars. "The French *Revolution* was in turn *paralleled* in the New World by the outbreak of Toussaint L'Ouverture's *insurrection* in 1791, which by 1806 had resulted in Haiti's former slaves creating the *second independent republic* of the Western Hemisphere" (Anderson, 192-3, emphasis mine). To be clear I am not suggesting that there is anything purposefully insidious about Anderson's use of "insurrection" in the case of Haiti, but I am saying that since this usage is both consistent across his references to Haiti[120] and differs from the word ascribed to France, that this should signal to us a difference in his thinking about the ways in which these forms of political violence are to be read. Though Haitian acts of anticolonial resistance appear in parallel, quasi-simultaneous time to the violence of the French Revolutionaries, something clearly appears lost in transatlantic translation. And this in direct contrast to *Stella* whose narrator explicitly comments on both the simultaneous and comparable nature of the events in France and Saint-Domingue.

> Admirable coïncidence des faits passés dans *le même temps à 1,800 lieues de distance*, sous l'empire magique des idées nouvelles. *Tandis que* la France, menacée de toutes parts, recrutait ses *anciens serfs* et en formait des bataillons qu'elle poussait convulsivement sur ses frontières, Saint-Domingue enrôlait *ses esclaves d'hier* et leur

[120] Compare, for example, to Anderson's previous characterization of Toussaint. Anderson, p. 48.

> confiait le soin de sa défense. *Dans l'un et autre pays*, ces nouveaux citoyens justifièrent pleinement l'attente de la liberté.[121]
>
> [Admirable coincidence of events occurring at *the same time at a distance of 1,800 lieus*, under the magical influence of new ideas. *While* France, threatened on all sides, recruited its *former serfs* and formed battalions out of them that she convulsively pressed forward towards her borders, Saint-Domingue enrolled *those who had been her slaves but yesterday* and entrusted her defense over to them. *In one country as in the other*, these new citizens fully justified their ascent to liberty.]

At this point it should be rather clear that Haiti presents a particular difficulty in Anderson's analysis of the rise of Nationalism. At once, implicitly part of the congress of New World, Creole nations—the insurrection in Haiti is the New World parallel to France's Revolution—but unable, because of its majority non-European, black population, to be absorbed into his thinking on the kind of Nationalism that characterized Continental North and South America. Indeed at no point, even in his relatively rare discussions of Haiti, is the notion of what would constitute the possible community that could imagine "Haiti" even discussed; the emphasis is always on the political state—"the second independent Republic in the Western Hemisphere"—that emerged from the "insurrectionary" violence.

That *black* Haiti has been passed down to us as the result of a complex, thirteen year, multi-front war against slavery and colonialism should not occlude the fact that Saint-Domingue was *also* home to a community of white, culturally European, Christian Creoles to which Andersonian analysis could have, but neglected to, speak. One could, for example, turn to one panel of the triptych Aimé Césaire has presented in his *Toussaint Louverture: La revolution française et le problème colonial* (1961) and note that the first section of his argument, centered on the antecedents of the Haitian Revolution, as we understand it, focuses on the spirit of anticolonialism

[121] Bergeaud, p. 94. Emphasis mine.

among the *white* planter class as a means of bypassing the unfavorable economic policies of metropolitan-centered mercantilism. Or, we could recall, as we mentioned in the first section, that the idea for refiguring the colonial space of French Saint-Domingue as "Aïti," was not the exclusive right of the black Haitian revolutionaries but rather was first an invention of the white planter class[122]. Furthermore, the demographic taxonomy that the Martinican-born creole, Moreau de Saint-Méry provides in his late eighteen-century *Description topographique, physique, civile, politique et historique de la partie française de l'île Saint-Domingue* (1789) in its separation of the white population of Saint-Domingue into Europeans and Creoles, provides strong evidence for the social stratification (because ontologically different) among the white population that Anderson identified among the other New World examples of Creole nationalisms[123]. Taken together these three moments—of a common, economically beneficent anticolonial policy, of a novel shared interpellation defined in its opposition to the metropole, and of the mobilization of discrete ontological characteristics shared by those born in the Caribbean—provide glimpses into an imagined community of white Creoles that might have been and of a Creole nationalism that has been, to borrow from Fischer, mostly disavowed.

Anderson's model failed to recognize the case of Haiti precisely because the Haitian revolutionaries came and interrupted the implicit transition from nascent "imagined Creole community," to "Creole Nationalism." Black Haiti, *Stella* suggests,

[122] Geggus, p. 216.

[123] « It was only too easy from there to make the convenient, vulgar deduction that creoles, born in a savage hemisphere, were by nature different from, and inferior to, to the metropolitans—and thus unfit for higher office". Anderson, p. 60.

was exactly that which was imaginable only when the whites (and Creoles among them) had left the island either by force or in death.

> *Cependant la population française avait disparu du sol, le Colon le premier.* On s'était saisi de lui ; il avait déjà le tremblement de la mort. On l'avait traîné sur la tombe de l'Africaine, forcé de s'y agenouiller, de demander pardon de ses iniquités à Dieu et aux hommes, et là, on avait versé tout son sang…. *Ainsi s'accomplit la révolution de Saint-Domingue, inaugurée par un supplice, le supplice d'Ogé, de Chavannes et d'autres martyrs, terminée par un massacre…*[124]
>
> [*Nevertheless the French population had disappeared from the land, The Colon first among them*. He had been captured; and was already trembling in anticipation of his death. He was dragged on the tomb of the African woman, made to kneel before it, and to ask forgiveness for his inequities before God and men, and there, was all of his blood poured out… *And thus the revolution of Saint-Domingue was realized, inaugurated by torture, the torture of Ogé, of Chavannes, and of other martyrs, it was ended in a massacre…*]

Thinking Indigène Nationalism

That Anderson's model could not theorize Haitian nationalism because it could not perceive a "non-Creole" nationalism at the close of the eighteenth century does not, nevertheless mean, that, read against the grain, it could not be made to speak of it. After all, Anderson's basic demand that an imagined community be constituted by members who envision themselves sharing a space in which they live simultaneous and parallel, though perhaps not intersecting, lives is neither alien nor unthinkable in the Haitian case.[125] To conclude this final section, then, I would like to use *Stella* to think through those moments where Anderson's history of the origins of nationalism in the New World visibly and painstakingly loses its way: the rise of Black nationalism in Haiti. In particular, I would like to trace the novel's account of two phenomena of an emerging sentiment of national belonging—the use of the pre-Haitian label of "Indigènes," and the adoption of the revolutionary flag—in an attempt

[124] Bergeaud, p. 247. Emphasis mine.

[125] It does require a rather radical reworking, as we will see, however, of one of Anderson's primary tenants.

to give voice to strands of black national consciousness that have remained underconsidered.

Analogous to the open acknowledgment of difference underlying the nomenclature "Creole" and "Metropolitan" among otherwise culturally and linguistically similar transatlantic communities, *Stella* introduces the term, "indigènes," to differentiate the black radical antislavery revolutionaries of Saint-Domingue from the now-threatening "Français," with whom they are supposed to share, since 1793, a common, transatlantic nationality[126]. The first self-reflexive use of the term in Bergeuad's narrative can logically be traced to the chapter, "Expédition française," which recounts the ominous 1802 arrival of eighty-four French warships (rumored to have been sent on Napoleon's orders to reestablish slavery) in the colony. Given the supposed shared citizenship of the two parties, it is not surprising that this sudden distinction require additional clarification; a footnote on this usage reveals the following: « On appelait Français les soldats de l'expédition de 1802, pour les distinguer de leurs adversaires, Africains et descendant d'Africains, qui étaient désignés sous le nom d'Indigènes » ["The soldiers of the 1802 expedition were called French to distinguish them from their adversaries, Africans and descendants of Africans, which were referred to by the name of Indigènes."] (Bergeaud, 251). Though the narrator does attempt to find sufficient space within the concept of French citizenship to make room for the antislavery insurgents with the designation, "Français

[126] Recall that Article 2 of Sonthonax's 1793 Declaration not only emancipated the formerly enslaved persons of Saint-Domingue but made them *French citizens* as well. Césaire, *Toussaint Louverture,* p.213.

de la colonie,"[127] its abandonment after a single use, as well as the persistent use of "Indigènes" to describe the insurgents, suggest that, as of 1802, the label of "Français" was no longer compatible with black radical antislavery whose proponents could imagine themselves along other lines.

What is rather incredible is that Césaire, providing his own account of the Haitian Revolution more than a century later in his *Toussaint Louverture* (1969) comes to a similar position in dating the origins of a shared, properly Haitian consciousness among the insurgents.

> *Le 5 août 1802* fut un grand jour : Charles Belair, le général favori de Toussaint Louverture, son disciple, celui que l'on croyait devoir être son successeur, officialisa, pour ainsi dire, le mouvement, en levant solennellement le drapeau du mouvement. *Partout une conscience nouvelle, qu'il faut bien appeler la conscience nationale, s'éveillait, s'affirmait, se révoltait*.
>
> **[…]**
> Désormais, tous les Haïtiens étaient du même côté. *Haïtiens, le mot n'est pas prématuré : les habitants de Saint-Domingue étaient en pleine mue*. Ils avaient attendu, qui, la liberté, qui, l'égalité, du triomphe de la démocratie en France. Ils se rendaient compte maintenant que seule l'indépendance de leur pays pouvait les leur garantir ; que l'indépendance de la nation haïtienne était et le boulevard de leur liberté et le rempart de leur dignité d'hommes.[128]
>
> [*August 5th 1802* was a glorious day : Charles Belair, the favored general of Toussaint Louverture, his disciple, the one that was believed to be his successor, formalized, in a manner of speaking, the movement by solemnly raising its flag. *Everywhere a new consciousness, that should well be called a national consciousness, was stirring up, asserting itself, revolting.*
> […]
> From then on all Haitians were on the same side. *Haitians, the word is not premature: the inhabitants of Saint-Domingue were coming of age.* They had awaited, what, liberty, what, equality, the triumph of democracy in France. They were now aware that only the independence of their country could safeguard these ideals for them; that the independence of the Haitian nation was both the boulevard of their liberty and the rampart of their dignity as men.]

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[127] « L'armée expéditionnaire s'en rendit coupable la première. A quelles fins ses cruautés ? *Les Français venus d'Europe* et *les Français de la colonie*, n'avaient-ils pas une nationalité commune ? » ["The expeditionary army was the first to incriminate itself. To what purposes should we attribute its cruelties? *The French from Europe* and *the French from the colony*, did they not sure a common nationality?"] Bergeaud, p. 145, Emphasis mine.

[128] Césaire, *Toussaint Louverture*, pp. 333, 335. Emphasis mine.

As we can see, in invoking the appellation "Haïtien," Césaire is aware that he is tempting anachronism. Yet, the imagined community, what Césaire calls "la conscience nationale," must not only *precede* the founding of such a nation but must also serve to justify political and military action on its behalf. Haiti, Césaire suggests, was born in the imagination of Haitians, who, seeing that the French had grown disinterested in upholding the twin solemn promises of racial equality and civil liberty, took up arms to defend these interests. Or, simply put, early nineteenth-century Haitian nationalism and anticolonialism can only be collectively imagined through the lens of radical antislavery.

For Anderson, imagined communities were, at least at their inception, everywhere continuously actualized by print culture, namely newspapers, which permitted the juxtaposition of events perceived as simultaneous among a readership for whom these events, by virtue of their imagined, shared interests, came to have a particular significance. But, a nationalism articulated along the lines of radical antislavery and constituted in large part by formerly enslaved individuals could not seemingly constitute a collective imaginary on the same *print* basis of either the Creole nationalisms of the New World or the Bourgeois vernacular nationalisms of the Old World. The question then becomes, what, if we provisionally bracket print, could have served a similar conjoining function in revolutionary Haiti?[129]

[129] I am not arguing that the spread of print was unimportant to the demands of radical antislavery. As both Laurent Dubreuil and Deborah Jenson have argued, Toussaint Louverture was particularly gifted in crafting print that could circulate a positive representation of the insurgents. (See Dubreuil. "L'ouverture d'une parole indigène en français," in *L'empire du langage*. Paris : Hermann, 2008. And Jenson. « Toussaint Louverture : Spin Doctor ?: Launching the Haitian Revolution in the French Media, » in *Tree of Liberty*.) But, as Laurent Dubois suggests, there is a difference between acknowledging the circulation of Republican ideas of rights contained in print among the insurgents

Le drapeau des Indigènes

If we look back to the preceding citation, Césaire does offer one clue: "Charles Belair […] officialisa, pour ainsi dire, le mouvement, en levant, solennellement, le drapeau du mouvement" ["Charles Belair […] formalized, in a manner of speaking, the movement by solemnly raising its flag"] (Césaire, 333). In fact, much like the appellation of "Indigènes," that served to mark the insurgents off from among the "French," the revolutionaries will construct an emblem that will both serve as a marker of contradistinction to their enemies and as a symbol of collective action. *Stella*'s narrative of the flag is particularly insightful in our case not only because it rewrites the account given by nineteenth-century historian Beaubrun Ardouin, but because the modifications brought about in the tale demonstrate the importance of the flag as a producer of significations, literally, a non-print text.

The first incarnation of the revolutionary flag in *Stella* holds no immediate, collective referent but rather a deeply personal meaning to the brothers. Following their reconciliation after a period of civil war, Romulus and Rémus meet with Stella (whom they had been avoiding during their fraternal conflict) and learn of France's intent to reinstitute slavery throughout the colony as had already been accomplished in Guadeloupe. Yet, in order to ensure that the brothers could indeed bring themselves to enter into a sustained military conflict with the nation that had once granted them their

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and stating that the Revolution itself only emerged as a result of them. See Laurent Dubois. "An enslaved Enlightenment: rethinking the intellectual history of the French Atlantic," *Social History* 31.1 (2006). P. 14. I am arguing that the spread of print culture alone cannot, given the demographics of Saint-Domingue, have been a sufficient precondition to the emergence of a sense of national consciousness among the Haitian insurgents.

liberty, Stella presents them with an object that they had previously entrusted to her care.

> Ils reçurent de Stella un objet dont la vue raviva leur haine contre Le Colon et les agita violemment : c'était la robe funèbre de l'Africaine.
> *Tout un passé vivait dans ce souvenir d'affection et de deuil.* Ils avaient là devant eux, leur mère et son supplice. *Rattachant le présent à ce passé maudit*, et s'exaltant du ressentiment des nouveaux attentats que l'assassin de l'Africaine avait ajoutés à son ancien forfait ; ils saisirent avec avidité le vêtement teint de sang.[130]
>
> [Stella handed over to them an object whose sight revived their hatred for the Colon and violently disturbed them: it was the funerary dress of the African woman.
> *An entire past lived on in this souvenir of affliction and grief.* There, before them, was their mother and the torture she had suffered. *Uniting the present to the accursed past* and increasingly aggravated from the bitterness of the new outrages that the African woman's assassin had added to his heinous crime; they greedily took hold of this garment dyed in blood.]

Certainly, the blood-soaked dress of their murdered mother is a violent reminder of their personal loss ("ce souvenir d'affection et de deuil"), but it also, as the narrator relates, serves to rejoin the past to the present. Their anger is not only directed at the assassination of Marie, but at all of the abuses of the Colon which remained constant even after metropolitan-sanctioned emancipation. That is, the dress, like their loss, is particular, but their anger and their resolution to live free of servitude is universalizable. Stella suggests as much when she says, "La cause à laquelle vous allez vous dévouer est celle de l'humanité toute entière autant que la vôtre propre » ["The cause to which you are going to devote yourselves is all of humanity's as much it is properly your own"] (Bergeaud, 169).

It could be argued that the somber souvenir of the red dress does not, in the strictest sense, constitute a flag around which collective action could take place—even if, as I have been suggesting, it allows at least the brothers to imagine the generalizable pain of their localized suffering under slavery—however, upon receiving

[130] Bergeaud, pp. 170-1.

the dress from Stella, the brothers quickly fashion out of it a very literal flag for their base camp. "A l'extrémité d'un mât élevé, formé d'une tige de bambou dépouillée de ses feuilles, et dressé au milieu du camp, ils attachèrent la robe de l'africaine, sombre drapeau dont la brise déroulait les plis sanglants » ["At the end of a raised mast, fashioned out of a bamboo pole stripped of its leaves, and placed in the center of their camp, they affixed the African woman's dress, somber flag whose bloodied folds were unfurled by the breeze"] (Bergeaud, 171). How then, do we go from this dress as a deeply personal reminder of loss to a symbol around which *all* Haitians (in Césaire's pre-1804 sense) can unite?

> Plus tard, une autre couleur, empruntée à l'azur de notre ciel, fut placée à côté de celle qui avait arborée la vengeance, soit pour en adoucir le sinistre reflet, soit pour rappeler la dualité de l'œuvre de l'indépendance haïtienne, accomplie par le dévouement commun d'individus d'épiderme différentes, et que bénit la Providence en créant une société de plus sous les auspices de la liberté.[131]
>
> [Later, another color, borrowed from the azure of our sky, was placed alongside the one which had been an emblem of vengeance, either to soften its sinister radiance or to serve as a reminder of the duality of the work of Haitian independence, accomplished by the shared devotion of individuals of different skin colors and which was blessed by Providence in having created yet another society under the auspices of liberty.]

Placed alongside the bright band of azure blue, the brothers' red emblem of personal vengeance takes on a unifying meaning. On the one hand this can be partially traced to the appropriation of "azure" which at once connotes liberty as well as the shared destiny of all men playing out under the firmament; but on the other, the blue, when coupled with the violent red, serves as a reminder, as the narrator surmises, of the "bi-colored" composition of Haitian society.[132] In this way, the flag comes to

[131] Bergeaud, p. 171.

[132] In this way, Bergeaud's narrator rejoins the logic behind the 1793 remobilization of the colors of the French Revolutionary tricolor in Saint-Domingue in which the three bands were taken to stand for the union of three races (black, mulatto, white) under a single French republican government and

signify the personal, but generalizable, horrors of slavery and the dignity of which all men, black or mulatto, are worthy.

Yet, if the genealogy of the Haitian flag, has, up until now always contained within it the seemingly historically contingent crimson band of revolutionary vengeance, the narrator must eventually account for the fact that the Haitian flag is, in many ways, directly related to the French tricolor:

> Leur drapeau était bicolore : c'était la simplification du drapeau français auquel ils avaient été si longtemps fidèles, qu'ils avaient rendu triomphant dans la guerre contre l'étranger, et qui *représentait* désormais pour eux un drapeau ennemi, celui de l'esclavage. Les couleurs adoptées par les deux frères *avaient au moral un sens* que nous avons déjà essayé d'*interpréter* ; leur *signification* politique était indépendance.[133]
>
> [Their flag was bi-colored: it was a simplification of the French flag to which they had been loyal for so long, a flag that they had rendered triumphant in a war against foreigners and which now *represented* for them an enemy banner, that of slavery. The colors adopted by the two brothers *had, morally speaking, a meaning* which we have already attempted *to interpret*; their political *meaning* was independence.]

This rather more "historical," retelling of the Haitian flag does acknowledge the connection between the two, now enemy, banners, but, what I find more interesting than this deferred avowal, is the way in which it glosses over the differences that eventually came to characterize the Haitian revolutionary and French flags—most notably the absence of the white banner in the bicolor—all of which are subsumed in the understated process of "la simplification du drapeau français." More than simplification, however, what interests the narrator, as he makes abundantly clear in the repeated insistence of the need to decode these symbols, is the process of *signification* by which flags generate meaning for certain collectives. If it were only a

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which waged war against the white, slave-owning flag of the Spanish Monarchy. Dubois, Laurent. *Avengers of the New World.* Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004. P. 163.

[133] Bergeaud, p. 208. Emphasis mine.

case of the French flag being legible as different from the flag of the insurgents that alone would be meaningful, as it would suggest, similar to the failure of the interpellation "Français" to speak for the "Indigènes," a fracturing in the collective colonial imagination; however, for those under the banner of the Indigènes, the French flag had also come to mean slavery, and it is this signification that makes of the French not simply neutral Others, but enemies, and of the difference in flags, a marker of the collective sentiment for anticolonial antislavery.

Stella's narrative of the development of the Haitian flag, however, does not coincide with the historical account provided by Beaubrun Ardouin in his nearly-contemporary *Etudes sur l'histoire d'Haïti*. The point here is not to criticize the novel for being counterfactual—such a claim would be almost nonsensical, given what we have already said about the complex relationship this novel weaves between history and fiction—but rather to insist that if the narrative of the flag has indeed been reimagined in *Stella*, as I argue it has, the reconfigurations (additions, erasures) should prove to be fruitful in reflecting upon the kinds of narratives that could be circulated about the emergence of Haitian nationalism.

I have been arguing, more or less directly, that a flag, as a symbol of collective action and as a marker of distinction from other communities, requires interpretation. In the specific case of Haiti I have been trying to note the connection between the documented rise in Haitian nationalist sentiment and the development of visible symbols of this sentiment. What makes Ardouin's account of the early flag of the Haitian insurgents so remarkable is that it explicitly links the two; or, said another

way, the failure of the early Haitian flag is precisely its capacity to be misread as French even in its (slight) difference, the visual equivalent of "Français de la colonie."

> Parmi les troupes françaises qui chassèrent Pétion du Cul-de-Sac, se trouvaient des indigènes du Port-au-Prince et de la Croix-des Bouquets ; ils ne furent pas les moins brillants dans cette affaire. L'un d'eux, dans la déroute de la 13e, prit l'un des drapeaux de ce corps : ils étaient encore *tricolores* comme ceux des Français, seulement on en avait arraché *le coq gaulois* qui les décorait. Ce drapeau porté en triomphe au Port-au-Prince, fit penser que les indigènes sous les ordres de Dessalines, n'avaient nulle idée d'indépendance, de nationalité distincte ; on publia cette opinion : bientôt on verra ce qu'elle produisit.[134]
>
> [Among the French troops which chased Pétion away from Cul-du-Sac were indigènes from Port-au-Prince and Croix-des-Bouquets ; they were not the least brilliant in this account. One of them, in the defeat of the 13th, took one of the flags of this corps: they were still *tri-colored* like those of the French; only they had taken off the *Gallic rooster* which served to decorate them. This flag, taken to Port-au-Prince in triumph, led others to believe that the indigenes, under the orders of Dessalines, did not have an idea of independence or of belonging to a distinct nationality; this opinion was published: we shall see what came of it.]

That is, the continued use of the French tricolor among the insurgents, minus the *coq gallois*, is misread not only as a disinterest in separation from the metropole but as the lack of the idea that they could imagine themselves as a distinct nationality. When a pamphlet attesting to the spread of these erroneous ideas reached the hands of Pétion he knew that action was required if the flag was to be a faithful sign of their anticolonial, antislavery sentiments.

> Dans la circonstance dont il s'agit, Pétion sentit la nécessité urgente de l'adoption d'un drapeau qui fût un signe de ralliement pour les indigènes, et distinct de celui des Français : c'était au général en chef à le choisir, à l'ordonner aux officiers généraux. Pétion lui envoya cet imprimé accompagné de ses réflexions. Dessalines prescrivit alors de retrancher la couleur *blanche* du drapeau dont on se servait : le drapeau *indigène* devint bicolore, *bleu et rouge*, et ces couleurs restèrent placées verticalement comme dans le drapeau français.
>
> Les Français purent comprendre alors, que les indigènes entendaient bien positivement *se séparer absolument* de la France, puisque le signe de ralliement n'était plus le même dans les camps opposés.[135]

[134] Ardouin, *Etudes sur l'histoire d'Haïti*. Tome 5, p. 79. Original emphasis.
[135] Ardouin, *Etudes sur l'histoire d'Haïti*. Tome 5, p. 84. Emphasis mine.

> [Under the given circumstances, Pétion felt the urgent need to adopt a flag which could serve as a sign of unity for the indigenes that would be distinct from that of the French: it was up to the General in Chief to choose it, to hand down the order to the generals and officers. Pétion sent him this pamphlet accompanied by his thoughts. And thus Dessalines ordered that the color *white* from the flag that they used be removed: the flag of the *indigenes* became bi-colored, *blue and red*, and these colors remained vertically placed as they had been in the French flag.
>
> The French could then understand that the indigenes had the rather undeniable intention of *absolutely separating themselves* from France, because the sign under which they rallied was no longer the same in the enemy camps.]

If we return to *Stella* we can see that what the narrator omits, then, is an account of the missteps and failures of the original flag to come to be read as the emblem of a distinct community which no longer imagined itself in communion with the French. By figuring the symbol of the insurgents primarily as *always* signifying the desire for independence and as something which could unite all Haitians—whether they had personally suffered from the violence of slavery ("red") or racial inequities ("blue")—*Stella* cannot help but gloss over not only the transformations by which the Haitian flag came to be derived from the French flag, but what this innocuously euphemistic "simplification" would come to signify. Said another way, given that the French republican tricolor had once been taken to stand for racial unity across all "three" of Saint-Domingue's populations of color, the removal of the white band should not be read only as a means by which the Haitian flag would merely distinguish itself, but rather, as the way the Haitian community sought to imagine the society it was fighting to create: free of slavery and racial intolerance, certainly—that had been, after all, the *original* meaning of the now treacherous French flag—but a society which could only be achieved by eliminating the white presence on the island. As I have noted briefly before, *Stella*'s narrator concludes the Haitian Revolution not at the actual

proclamation of Independence but with the subsequent massacre of the remaining white civilian population. "Le sexe, l'âge, l'innocence, le crime, tout fut confondu dans la même vengeance. […] Ainsi, s'accomplit la révolution de Saint-Domingue» ["Sex, age, innocence, crime, all was confused in the same act of vengeance. […] And thus was accomplished the revolution of Saint-Domingue"] (Bergeaud, 245, 247).

In providing a reading of the appearance of what we might call "nationalist" sentiment in *Stella*, centered, as we have seen, on the deployment of the appellation, "Indigènes," as well as the narrative *Stella* provides of the development of the Haitian flag, I have tried to interrogate several of Anderson's claims about the worldwide spread of nationalism. As I noted earlier, Haiti presented a useful test case for Andersonian analysis because the late eighteenth-century society of Saint-Domingue exhibited the symptoms of a white, culturally European Creole Nationalism that, while ultimately unsuccessful in founding a society in the New World, was nevertheless present yet inexplicable absent from Anderson's account. Second, because Anderson's argument is historically contingent—subsequent forms of nationalism can be imagined but only because they modulate earlier, now recognizable models of nationalism—and so dependent upon the circulation of print materials (novels, newspapers) to actualize the sentiment of simultaneity, it remains rather uncertain what we are to make of *black*, non-Europeanized, Indigène nationalism among a largely illiterate, formerly enslaved population. It is largely outside of the scope of this chapter to discuss the formations of early Haitian national consciousness more generally; however, I hope to have demonstrated on the one hand that Anderson's Creole nationalism cannot account for the ways in which Haitian national identity

developed among the formerly enslaved. Furthermore, the case of Haiti makes it quite clear that print, while perhaps still necessary, may not have to be uniformly circulated amongst all of the members who imagine themselves as part of that community, and that the role it plays is rather more complex. We need only to think, for example, of the pamphlet intercepted by Pétion which incited Dessalines to make changes in the Haitian insurgent flag, which would itself be the rallying symbol for those interpellated by the call of "Indigènes."

In her attempt to explain the collective, national (and not solely political) advantages conferred by Christophe's Northern Monarchy in the years following independence, Sibylle Fischer notes that one advantage of a monarchy, say, over a text-based constitutional Republic, lies in its legibility in the face of illiteracy.

> If all nations are in some sense imagined communities, and if print capitalism is the structural core of Creole nationalism, as Benedict Anderson has argued, we could see Christophe's kingdom of the north as an attempt to produce a stable community through an imaginary that can function even if 90 percent of the population cannot read and write, and even if there is no local newspaper that can propagate the feeling of community and shared interests.[136]

Fischer's remark is generative in that it allows us to contemplate the ways in which the national community might have come to be imagined in the absence of, or the inability to decode, print. Such a view might serve as a starting point for thinking about the ways in which not only flags, but skin color—and we have already seen how they are linked by metonymy—might be a widely-circulated and legible text in a slave society that, when coupled with the oral transmission of events, would allow for the contemplation of simultaneity in the absence of a community that is uniformly capable of accessing the public print-sphere. However, these contemplations pose two

[136] Fischer, p.259.

important questions. For one, though fractured at the moment which interests Fischer, was it not rather clear, from of our readings of *Stella* (as well as Césaire and Ardouin), that a collective, national imaginary was already in a process of formation in the wake of the "Franco-Indigène" war of 1802-1804? Second, and more importantly, if monarchy and readily consumable royal symbolism can take the place of the circulation of print[137], what is to be made of the historical component of Anderson's argument? Posed simply: can we imagine nationalism among illiterate communities?

As with Fischer and as suggested by *Stella*, I do not believe that print is everywhere, at least not in the traditional sense, evenly necessary to the development of nationalist sentiment among members of the would-be imagined community. If, for example, we were to return to my hypothesis that the slave body were in some ways a circulating, legible text of early capitalism that not only was read (as a specific kind of colonial subject) but could read others (as experiencing suffering comparable and simultaneous to their own) than the conditions of the imagined community are met even if the (juridical, demographic, or other) texts upon which these classifications were actualized remained illegible by many of the enslaved. Read in this way, the Haitian transnational nationalism (and its gradual absorption into a more traditional nationalism) which Fischer traces throughout the nineteenth century constitutions is not merely a disavowed element of what would later come to constitute modernity, but perhaps one of the few ways of articulating the black community that might initially have been imagined through an optic of phenotypically legible, shared historical

[137] This would make of the Haitian case, wherein the nation draws legitimacy and forms its national imaginary through a legible dynastic monarchy, the inverse of the Old World dynastic monarchies who, in Anderson's account, circulate "Official Nationalisms" to retain dynastic power. See Anderson, "Official Nationalism and Imperialism." *Imagined Communities.*

suffering. As a founding fiction of Haitian literature, and as fiction of Haiti's founding, *Stella*'s tale of fraternal conflict and union helps to articulate how Haitians, by mid-century, had come to understand the ties that once bound them together across their ethnic, linguistic and religious differences.

Conclusions

Part of what initially drew me to *Stella* was the contrast between the privileged place that the novel holds in the Haitian literary chronology and the relatively scant commentary that more than one-hundred and fifty years of criticism had been able to produce on the subject. Of course, the novel's historical uniqueness alone does not, in and of itself, merit serious, sustained scholarship—a note in a literary history would accomplish the task as easily and with less work—however, part of the work I have undertaken in this chapter is precisely to demonstrate the ways in which *Stella* might effortlessly insert itself into the conversations on history and historiography that characterize much of the work currently being undertaken in the field of Haitian Studies.

Even at the level of textual object, before even turning a single page, *Stella*, like the other 19th century novels, poses a serious problem of periodization. Either *Stella* forms the proper of Haitian literary *pre*history—ultimately unable to realize a truly Haitian novel from its quasi-historical raw materials—or, it *pre*figures Haitian forms of mid-twentieth century narration and appears then as an *anachronistic* outlier, incompatible with its own time. Unlike the realist, if uninspiring, *Une chercheuse* (1889) by Louis-Joseph Janvier, which committed the cardinal sin of being set in the

beaches of western France and the battlefields of Egypt rather than in Haiti, difficulties in approaching *Stella* stemmed, not from its exotic locale, but from the uncertainty of how to approach the text. It is one thing to clumsily ask whether *Stella* is a novel; it is another to ask what *Stella* sees as the discursive potential and limits of novelistic discourse in recounting historical events. It is this second line of questioning, as the reader is now well aware, that interests me. To some extent, Bergeaud left an explicit trail—here in his Avertissement, there in his narrator's open musings—of the ultimately ambiguous relationship he envisioned between historical and literary prose and their points of interpenetration[138].

Fascinating as these reflections were, I knew that I also wanted to be attentive to the novel's more implicit pronouncements on the actualization of historical time. My analysis of the narratological recurrence of prolepsis—in particular to the moment of Independence—suggests that alternative temporalities, temporal superpositions, and even anachronism, more than simply being useful, may be, as in the case of the radical analepsis to the Amerindian past at the moment of national founding, absolutely essential to recounting Haiti's national history.

Provisionally taking these temporal discontinuities as possible crises in the articulation of time, I sought, in the second section of this chapter, to theorize the way in which the text understood the relationships between the notions of "past," "present," and "future." Theorists of conceptual historiography take the French [to

[138] And this not merely in the way, as Paul Ricoeur has argued, that fictional and historical discourses depend largely on one another to be felicitous. That generic historical discourse borrows from the emplotment of novels, and that a generic narrator relates events in her past, does not alone account for the rather unique case of a novel explicitly staging its retelling of history. See "Chapter 8: The Interweaving of History and Fiction." In Ricoeur, Paul. *Time and Narrative*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988.

which I would add Haitian] Revolution as *the* moment when the dominant paradigm for understanding and processing metahistorical emplotment, the *Historia Magistra Vitae*, which had for so long bound the narrative possibilities of the future to the experiences of the past, struggled to articulate the world to come. In light of Hartog's conceptual apparatus, *Stella* demonstrated a clear tension between its reliance on the past-oriented *Historia Magistra Vitae* and the more futural modes of narrative prolepsis and prophecy. Intuitively this tension is not incomprehensible; Haitian history requires the simultaneous reactualization of the Indigenous past—"Haïti"—and the opening of a new future from that same point in the past. Yet, like Hartog's Chateaubriand, Bergeaud shows himself unable to adopt the inverted, future-centered regime of history in the vein of de Tocqueville; as such, the unspecified future on which *Stella* closes, rather than illuminating the course to be taken in the present offers little other than his aspirations. In contrast, *L'Haïtiade,* which I presented as something of *Stella*'s poetic foil, explicitly performed, through the return of the spectral Toussaint, the enlightening of the present from the vantage point of the future. This relationship to the future allowed Desquiron, unlike Bergeaud, to question the implicit resolution of Saint-Domingue's colonial problems in the era of Haitian postcoloniality.

The third section was also concerned with apprehensions of time—it is the concept of "simultaneity", after all, that gives Benedict Anderson's argument its force—but the intent there was to create something of a literary complement to Sibylle Fischer's analyses of the Haitian Constitutions. That is, taking *Stella* as a literary foundational fiction that could reveal the fantasies of national communion, it became

possible to speak to the discontinuity in Anderson's account of the history of the modern concept of nationalism. As I pointed out, because of the linearity required in his historical argument, Anderson makes no attempt to explain the rise of Haitian nationalism, either in the aborted white Creole form, or the successful, black Indigenous mode. By tracing the label of "Indigènes" and the reimagined narrative of the development of the Haitian flag in *Stella*, we were led to question the place that print might have originally played in the black Haitian community's sense of itself and ultimately, the very historicity on which Anderson's argument relies.

Far from being a critically-imposed mode of inquiry, *Stella* actively reflects upon and invites questions of historicity, historiography, and historical production which seem especially fruitful given the current historical bent of scholarship in Haitian Studies. Rather than linger on questions such as whether or not the text is a novel, or even a "Haitian" novel—we need only turn to Frédéric Marcelin, whom others take as the "true" father of the Haitian literature, to see that he saw *Stella* as a novel, and a national one at that[139]—I have chosen to focus on the question of how literature attests to the complex temporal reconfigurations of Haitian history. In the

[139] « J'aurais pu, m'enveloppant des voiles de la fiction, au lieu de *Thémistocle-Epaminondas Labasterre,* bâtir un *roman de convention*. A l'instar de cet auteur qui célébra Toussaint Louverture et André Rigaud sous les dénominations bizarres de Romulus et Rémus—*et par là resta national*—j'aurais pu vous montrer une jeune Haïti pure, impeccable, foudroyant, selon la bonne formule, la tyrannie, la terrassant au souffle vengeur de la Liberté et de la Justice. J'ai voulu autre chose». ["I could have, in enveloping myself with the veils of fiction, constructed *a conventional* novel rather than *Thémistocle-Epaminondas Labasterre.* Like the author who celebrated Toussaint Louverture and André Rigaud under the curious denominations of Romulus and Rémus—*and in so doing remained a national author*—I could have shown you a younger Haiti, a Haiti pure, impeccable, striking the fatal blow, as we say, to tyranny, leveling it in time to the vengeful breath of Liberty and Justice. I wanted to do something else."] Marcelin, Frédéric. *Autour de deux romans, 2e Edition*. Port-au-Prince : Editions Fardin, 1984. P. 27. Emphasis mine.

next chapter we turn to a sustained interrogation of the poetic and theatrical literature of the nineteenth and early twentieth century in an attempt to theorize the conceptual framework that allowed Saint-Domingue to become, in the minds of Haitians, not Haiti, but *Haiti (once more)*.

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CHAPTER 2
INHERITING 'HAITI': TEMPORAL RECONFIGURATIONS OF THE AMERINDIAN IN LITERATURE OF THE GREATER NINETEENTH CENTURY

Introduction

« Haïti veut dire dans le langage de ses premiers habitants : Terre haute, montagneuse et boisée. C'était ainsi, surtout, que les indigènes de la partie occidentale appelaient l'île. »[140]

« Une idée, émise on ne sait non plus par qui le premier, avait réuni tous les suffrages : c'était de restituer à l'île entière, qui devait former le nouvel Etat, le nom qu'elle portait sous ses premiers habitants —Haïti.[141] ***»***

["In the language of its first habitants Haiti means: tall, mountainous, and wooded land. It was in this way, above all, that the indigenous population of the western portion called the island."

"The idea, first put forward by an individual whose identity is now unknown, had gained traction: it was to restore to the whole of the island that would form the new State, the name that it had had under its first inhabitants—Haiti."]

When called upon by the U.S. Senate to justify the extreme violence used by his forces in American Occupied Haiti (1915-1934), Lieutenant Colonel Alexander S. Williams deployed a rather original rhetorical defense. "For the unauthorized killing of prisoners, there is an uninterrupted series of precedents running back to that established by the Cacique [*Indian chief*] Coanabo [*sic.*] in 1492" (Dubois, 236).[142] Williams' defense is thus two-fold: in reducing Haitian history to a body of case law, he justifies the atrocities committed under his command at once by the sheer weight of the innumerably anonymous precedents ("uninterrupted series") that have preceded him, but also returns to the citation of the original violence: *Caonabo v. Fort of the*

[140] Nau, Emile. *L'histoire des Caciques d'Haïti.* Paris : Gustave Guérin et Cie, Editeurs, 1894. [2e Ed.] pp. 363-4.
[141] Ardouin, Beaubrun. *Etudes sur l'histoire d'Haïti.* Vol. 2. Tome 6. p. 7.
[142] As quoted in Dubois, Laurent. *Haiti : The Aftershocks of History.* New York: Metropolitan Books, 2012. p. 236.

Nativity (1493). While it is difficult to imagine that the U.S. Senate—or any other rational deliberating body, for that matter—would accept such a specious spatio-historical argument, his justification remains illuminating. By figuring himself as an actor in the unbroken chain of violent 'Haitian' figures he forces an incongruous identification between the indigenous fifteenth century Indian chieftain, Caonabo, who aggressively resisted Spanish territorial encroachment until his premature death, and himself, a twentieth century agent of a foreign government now attempting to occupy the same land that Caonabo once died to defend. That is, he not only dispossesses Haitians of this prided Amerindian lineage but also wields the Amerindian past against the Haitian present. Furthermore, Williams' "uninterrupted series" implicitly acknowledges in the twentieth century what Haitian historians and writers sought to problematize in the nineteenth century: the history of the Amerindians living on the island of 'Haiti'[143] is, indeed must be, part of the history of the modern black Republic of Haiti.

In the previous chapter we noted that both Ardouin's *Etudes* and Bergeaud's *Stella* carved out a rather unique place for the Amerindian past and the concomitant voyages of discovery. In one text as in the other, an extraordinarily brief history of the Indigenous population of the island—more the trace of a history, than a history as such—erupts somewhat anachronistically at the moment of Haitian independence as if this Amerindian history, like the political identification intended in the postcolonial

[143] In placing one of the original appellations of the island between inverted commas, I hope to provide here, as elsewhere, a readily legible distinction between the land of the aboriginals, 'Haiti,' and the nineteenth century nation, Haiti, which it so self-avowedly inspired.

nomenclature 'Haiti'[144], provided the ground, the mythic origin, upon which the Haitian collective imaginary and the nation could be founded.

In this chapter I will examine the ways in which other nineteenth and early twentieth century texts, both historical and literary, articulate the place of Amerindian history within the greater scope of Haitian national history. Methodologically, it is important to point out that the corpus of texts in my readings for this chapter—what I will often refer to as "literature of Amerindian inspiration"—is composed of Haitian texts written between the first and 'second' independence (1804-1934) which explicitly reference the life-worlds, however imagined or historically incongruous, of the aboriginal inhabitants of 'Haiti'. As we shall see, these texts, while displaying a certain homogeneity in the reiteration of certain tropes and textual features—brief paratextual lexicons, footnoted translations, anticolonial slogans, etc.—also exhibit a variety of responses to what is perhaps *the* question underlying this metahistorical reflection: just what is the nature of the special relationship between the largely exterminated Amerindian population of Haiti and the descendants of displaced African slaves that allows for this historical incorporation (or should we speak of annexation)? Was it a question of a rather specious sanguine genetic inheritance? Or, as Lieutenant Colonel Williams' response to the Senate seems to suggest, was it a question of territorial inheritance? *The mountainous land has pushed me to slaughter at it has always done.* Perhaps, as Sibylle Fischer notes in her writing on the evolving project of Haitian transnationalism, it was ultimately neither a question of immediate kinship nor of a shared relationship to the land, but rather a common affective experience, an

[144] Fischer, Sibylle. *Modernity Disavowed: Haiti and the Cultures of Slavery in the Revolution.* Durham: Duke University Press, 2004. P.242.

acknowledgement of mutual, though diachronic and largely discontinuous, suffering which grounds the territorial inheritance to follow[145]. In other words, how and under what circumstances did the Haitians of the nineteenth century come to re-actualize their relationship to the revolutionary project of renaming their Antillean pearl after the mountainous land that Columbus once called a marvel to behold?

Inheritances: Toponymic and otherwise…

Many commentators have, almost as a matter of contextual coherence, concisely remarked the rather obvious but nonetheless important fact that the 1804 naming of 'Haiti' was past-oriented ("*ré*stituer," (Ardouin); "reached *back*" (Dubois); "*re*naming," (Fischer)); fewer have attempted to articulate this collective temporal reorientation within the toponymic logic of the period. If I do so briefly here it is because I would like to reinforce the concept of 'inheritance' that I have been using rather deliberately in speaking of Haiti. In his analysis of the ways in which the space of the Americas came to be covered up with European proper names, Benedict Anderson has drawn attention to the logic of temporality that underwrote the conventions of name-giving. More than merely baptizing spaces in the Americas 'new' versions of existing 'old' European spaces—*La nouvelle-Orléans*— "what is startling in the American naming of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries is that 'new' and 'old' were understood synchronically, coexisting within homogenous, empty time. […] [*Which recalls*] *an idiom of sibling competition rather than of inheritance*"

[145] Fischer, pp.243-4.

(Anderson, 187, emphasis mine).[146] Anderson is useful in that he allows us to think "Haiti" in reverse. It is not surprising that postcolonial Haiti did not adopt the convention of naming itself after an existing version of another space; synchronous, sibling spaces require, among other things, a sense of parallelism between two places[147] and the asylum clauses in Haiti's early constitutions reveal nothing if not the apprehension that there were no other spaces from which one could escape the net of transatlantic slavery save Haiti[148]. Barring that option, Haiti could have been named after something radically new, but it was not. The "parallel" space that the early Haitians ultimately settled on was in another time, a fact betrayed by the name itself: '*New* Haiti' would have, if we are to take Anderson seriously, conveyed synchronicity; Haiti acknowledges the diachronic structure of the gesture and opens the door to a temporal logic of inheritance.

Beyond the Andersonian temporality of inheritance (intuited backwards from a logic of fraternity), the Derridean concept of inheritance is primarily concerned with the play of activity and inactivity that structure the responsibilities of the recipient. For Derrida, inheriting is as active as we may have always assumed it was passive; that is, to inherit is: first, *to accept* that which came before—a perhaps inassimilable past—which we receive *without our choosing* and second, to reaffirm and to make it

[146] Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism.* London: Verso, 1991. p. 187.
[147] Anderson, p. 188.
[148] For an outstanding analysis of the implications of the so-called 'asylum clauses' in the early Haitian constitutions for the project of Haitian transnational nationalism, see: Fischer, "Chapter 11: Foundational Fictions: Post-Revolutionary Constitutions I." pp. 227-244.

new in a manner so as to keep the inheritance *in life*.[149] As we turn to the literature inspired by the Amerindian period of Haitian history, we shall see that these concerns, and in particular the notion of "keeping [the inheritance] alive" [*le maintenir en vie*], which recalls Reinhart Koselleck's analysis of monuments built to honor the dead, to which we shall return, will be readily immanent.

In addition to the concerns of the legitimacy of the Amerindian heritage and the gestures by which it is accepted, I am also interested by the ways in which these texts articulate time more generally. Do they, for example, stage post-revolutionary Haitian history as the repetition of emblematic events already undergone by their Amerindian ancestors? Or, do they posit a historical inheritance but allow sufficient space for rearticulation such that nineteenth century Haitians are not bound in a cyclical history but rather have an opening by which they might articulate alternate possible futures? *Stella* suggested that the moment of the naming of 'Haiti' was a clear point of temporal discontinuity, the laying bare of a temporal crisis. Does the Amerindian past, as it is retold largely by Haitian playwrights, poets and historians[150] throughout the nineteenth century, contain other such temporal crises, and if so, do they suggest instabilities in the regimes of historicity? Furthermore, and lastly, what can be gleaned from the relatively frequent invocations of this inheritance about Haitian desires and apprehensions to incorporate Amerindian history into Haitian history?

[149] Derrida, Jacques and Elisabeth Roudinesco. *De quoi…Demain : Dialogue.* Paris : Librarie Arthème et Editions Galilée, 2001. pp. 15-6.
[150] The absence of novelists will be addressed at a later point.

I: Ecrivons sur d'autres traces: The Early Nineteenth Century

Proclamation of Independence (1804)

"Marchons sur d'autres traces: imitons ces peuples qui, portant leurs sollicitudes jusque sur l'avenir, et appréhendant de laisser à la postérité l'exemple de la lâcheté, ont préféré être exterminés que rayés du nombre des peuples libres. »[151]

["Let us pursue other tracks: let us imitate those people who, bearing their concerns unto the future, and fearing to leave to their posterity and example of their cowardice, preferred to be exterminated rather than stricken from among the free peoples of the world."]

On the night of December 31st, 1803, Dessalines had formally rejected another imitation. Assigned the task of drafting the Haitian Declaration of Independence, the military officer Charéron, looking north to Jefferson and the United States as models, drafted what is said to have been an admirable text in which he outlined the grievances of the Haitians against the French government and the rights which should be guaranteed to those of African descent.[152] Yet the would-be Declaration, as intelligent as it may have been, lacked the visceral passion, the articulation of the desire for vengeance that Dessalines sought. Instead, Dessalines chose Boisrond Tonnerre, who, having recognized the affective energy that Dessalines wanted to instill in this founding text, is likely remembered most for having said: "Pour rédiger cet acte il nous faut la peau d'un blanc pour parchemin, son crâne pour écritoire, son sang pour encre et une baïonnette pour plume" ["In order to draft this act, what is needed is the skin of a white man as a parchment, his skull as an inkwell, his blood as ink, and a bayonet as a quill"] (Ardouin, 7). What I am trying to suggest in briefly recounting the tale of the document is that in reading the Proclamation of Independence for the traces of an Amerindian legacy is that it is important to read it not only in light of the

[151] *Proclamation à la nation.* 1804.
[152] Ardouin. *Etudes.* Vol. 2. Tome 6. p.7.

colonial heritage that it most obviously rejects—that of the French "barbarians"—but also in light of the intellectual kinship, the (post)colonial lineages of Independence that it did not, indeed refused, to trace out: the Jeffersonian, European-settler model. Though direct references to the Amerindians in the Proclamation are limited—the epigraph that I used to open this section qualifies as the only explicit mention—several conventions of the Proclamation occur with such frequency that it is nearly impossible to comprehend later Amerindian-inspired texts without it. Furthermore, the proclamation, through several rhetorical gestures, will actually serve to facilitate the work of articulating an inheritance between the Indians of 'Haiti' and the Haitians after slavery.

"Il faut," reads the Proclamation, "par un dernier acte d'autorité nationale, assurer à jamais l'empire de la liberté dans le pays qui nous a vu naître » ["It is necessary, by a final act of national authority, to ensure the empire of liberty in the country which saw us be born unto eternity"] (Proclamation). It is not enough to say, as we know now, that the majority of the Haitian population at the time that the Proclamation was being read was African born, largely marginalized[153], and, as a result, *not* born in Haiti; as an exemplary foundational fiction with questionable standing in the eyes of the contemporary International community, the Proclamation is clearly intended to speak more to the desires of the emerging nation and the ties around which national belonging might coalesce than extent realities. Instead, it might be better to say that the Proclamation imagines all Haitians as always already *indigenously* Haitian. Furthermore, and importantly, this commandment founded

[153] Dubois, p. 49.

upon national authority figures, here as elsewhere, the project of radical antislavery as forever unfinished. That is, the future that 'postcolonialism' opens up seemingly always contains within it the possibility of encroachments to the personal liberty, the threat of a renewed enslavement on Haitian soil. Already we are starting to see the coordinates by which the identification of nineteenth century Haitians with the fifteenth century aboriginal population of 'Haiti' might have become thinkable: native sons and daughters of a defined and delimited territory ("dans le pays") in which eternal vigilance with regard to a loss of personal liberty is required.

Having said that, let us return to Dessalines' call to imitation:

"Marchons sur d'autres traces: imitons ces peuples qui, portant leur sollicitudes jusques sur l'avenir, et appréhendant de laisser à la postérité l'exemple de la lâcheté, ont préféré être exterminés que rayés du nombre des peuples libres. »[154]

["Let us pursue other tracks: let us imitate those people who, bearing their concerns unto the future, and fearing to leave to posterity and example of their cowardice, preferred to be exterminated rather than stricken from among the free peoples of the world."]

What is immediately evident in the periphrasis is that Dessalines does not seek to establish an immediate identity between the two populations—that would indeed prove fatal—instead, he posits the Amerindian population as an extreme historical exemplar worthy of imitation, less for the fact of their unfortunate death than for the meaning he ascribes to it. In fact, the fifteenth century 'Haitians' provide the axiological weight, a moral assurance, to his repeated calls that his contemporaries always choose death in defending liberty over life in bondage. « Et toi, peuple […] prête donc entre mes mains le serment de vivre libre et indépendant, et de *préférer la mort à tout ce qui tendrait à te remettre sous le joug* » [And you, people of Haiti, […] swear then the oath, between these hands of mine, to live free and independent, and to

[154] *Proclamation à la nation.* 1804.

prefer death to anything which might place you under the yoke once again"] (Proclamation, emphasis mine). The conclusion to Dessalines' proclamation simply transforms the Amerindian past (« ont préféré »; "[preferred]") into a futural optative (« [faire le serment] de préférer [si…] » ; ["[take the oath] to prefer [if…]"]). But there is more at work here. If Dessalines looks back from 1804 to the final moments of the Amerindians for an example, his gaze is met with a complex glance from the past looking forward. Indeed, it is, according to the Proclamation, seemingly entirely because of their concerns for the future ("portant leurs sollicitudes jusques sur l'avenir"; ["bearing their concerns unto the future"]) and how they would be remembered by future generations ("appréhendant de laisser à la postérité l'exemple de la lâcheté"; ["fearing to leave to posterity and example of cowardice"]) that the Amerindians fought to the death. In the moment where the imagined Amerindian glance into the future looks back upon itself, in what we might call the mode of prophecy, it not only meets Dessalines' gaze but doubles it; the Amerindians thus leave the example, those tracks, that Dessalines was always already meant to follow.

Perhaps following in the furtive footsteps of Caonabo, in February of 1804 Dessalines called for the massacre of several thousand French whites who had remained in Haiti following Independence. In a proclamation that he issued to justify the killings he explained, "Yes we have paid back those *true cannibals* crime for crime, outrage for outrage. I have saved my country. I have *avenged America*."[155] If "America" remains a rather unclear referent for the act of vengeance –was he avenging the long fallen

[155] As quoted in Dubois, 42. My emphasis.

Amerindians? those who had fallen under slavery? the recently deceased of the revolutionary war?—the Proclamation of Independence was rather clear on this point:

> Citoyens indigènes, hommes, femmes, filles et enfants, portez vos regards sur toutes les parties de cette île : cherchez-y, vous, vos épouses ; vous, vos maris ; vous, vos frères ; vous, vos sœurs, que dis-je ? Cherchez-y vos enfants, vos enfants à la mamelle ; que sont-ils devenus ? ... je frémis de le dire ... la proie de ces vautours […] dont l'affreuse présence vous reproche votre insensibilité et votre coupable lenteur à *les venger*. Qu'attendez-vous pour apaiser leurs mânes ? Songez que vous avez voulu que *vos restes* reposassent auprès de *ceux de vos pères*, quand vous avez chassé la tyrannie ; descendrez-vous dans *leurs tombes* sans *les avoir vengés* ? Non ! *leurs ossements repousseraient les vôtres*.[156]
>
> ["Indigenous citizens, men, women, girls and children, gaze upon the various parts of this island: you there, seek your wives; you, your husbands; you, your brothers; you, your sisters, what am I saying? Look for your children, your children at the breast; what has become of them?...I tremble as I speak…the prey of those vultures […] whose horrid presence reproaches your callousness and the guilty, sluggish pace you have taken to *avenge them*. What are you waiting for in order to appease their ancestors? Know that you wanted *your remains* to rest alongside *those of your fathers*, after having chased tyranny away; would you descend into *their tombs* without *having avenged them?* No! *Their remains would be repulsed by yours.*]

Dessalines' call to vengeance is not subtle. After forcing his interlocutors to contemplate the collective ("sur toutes les parties de cette île"; ["upon the various parts of this island"]) and personal ("cherchez-y, vous"; ["you there, seek"]) human cost of so many years of warfare as an incitement to violence against the remaining French "vultures," he then shifts tactics. It is not only because the dead have been unjustly taken from us that we avenge the dead, Dessalines suggests, but rather that beyond what we, as the living, might want, beyond the personal psycho-therapeutic effects we might expect to reap from exacting vengeance, it is ultimately an expectation of the dead: it is a debt owed the dead. For Dessalines, as we have just seen, the corporeal remains—the bodies that call out for vengeance—belong to the recently deceased Haitians. However, if I am correct, the elements of the Haitian

[156] Proclamation. 1804. My emphasis.

proclamation that I have chosen to highlight thus far—the already 'indigenous' nature of nineteenth century Haitians, the structural incompleteness of the struggle for liberty, the call to imitate the Amerindians' preference for death over bondage, and the thematic of vengeance as a debt to the past—all provide the necessary textual inheritance (in the Derridean sense) which later authors and thinkers could draw from to articulate the relationship between Haitians and the remains of their fifteenth century Amerindian ancestors.

« Ils ne sont plus, voilà leurs déplorable restes ! Ils ont été détruits ! »

Writing a decade later, after the euphoria of Independence had faded and the newly liberated nation had been sundered by political turmoil into two contiguous states, the Baron de Vastey, personal secretary to the Northern monarch, Henri Christophe, penned the first volume of his *Le système colonial dévoilé* (1814). Vastey's text is part history of the European colonial enterprise in the Americas and part sustained moral condemnation of the specific human costs exacted by the Saint-Domingan plantations upon Africans and their descendants. "Ce n'est pas un roman que j'écris, c'est l'exposé des malheurs, de longues souffrances et des supplices inouïs, qu'a éprouvés un peuple infortuné pendant des siècles » ["It is not a novel that I have set about to write, but rather an account of the misfortunes, the long suffering, and the unbelievable tortures that an unfortunate people underwent for centuries"] (Vastey, 39).[157] Vastey was quite serious on this point; nearly a third of this first volume is devoted to an enumeration of the names of specific planters and the precise method

[157] Vastey, Pompée Valentin. *Le système colonial dévoilé.* Vol. 1. Cap-Henry : Chez P. Roux, Imprimerie du Roi, 1814. p. 39.

they used to discipline—let's be clear, often murder—their slaves. One example, I believe, will suffice to show the potential perlocutionary effects of his text: "Le Baron Délugé, surnommé *le bon blanc*, habitant au Mont-Rouis, qui passait généralement pour tel, a fait tailler un de ses noirs à mort ; le cœur de ce malheureux palpitait encore lorsqu'il le fit enterrer sous ses yeux. C'était en effet un bon blanc ; jugé des autres par ce trait d'humanité de ce *bon blanc* » [The Baron Délugé, affectionately called *the good white,* living in Mont-Rouis, and which generally was taken as such, had one of his slaves put to death ; the heart of this unfortunate soul was still beating even as he had him buried before his eyes. Indeed, he was a good white, and was judged by others according to this hint of humanity of the good white"] (Vastey, 53).

Vastey's text, however, does not begin with this rather gruesome, if beneficent, purge of the violence inflicted on so many black bodies, since he sees these abuses as only the latest manifestation of the colonial power his work is attempting to *uncover, exhume* [dévoilé], the volume begins rather with the extermination of the Amerindians. "Destruction des premiers habitants. Origine de la traite. Monstruosité de ce trafic » reads the opening chapter title ["The destruction of the first inhabitants. The origins of the slave trade. Monstrosity of this trade."] (Vastey, 1). If we choose to read this title as a triptych, that is, as three separate but closely-related and unified panels in colonial history, I would argue that we can see the emergence of Vastey's thinking through the articulation between the exterminated Amerindian population and the mutilated corpses of plantation slaves. A careful, though perhaps overly brief, reading would point out that Vastey's title seems to imply that the Atlantic Slave Trade first emerged

as a response to the decimated Antillean labor force brought about by the massive population losses suffered by 'Haiti's first inhabitants. Vastey would thus be positing two historically contiguous but ultimately diachronic populations. Finally, the disavowed agent of violence—present in each of the panels—brings his monstrosity to the emerging network of global trade in human flesh. I would not disagree. However, I would also argue that if we now take the panels and read them together, instead of simply taking them as a sequence, we can see that the suffering of the "first inhabitants" in the first panel is mirrored in the unnamed torments of the third. Taking these two findings together Vastey's title thus articulates the nature of the special relationship between the Amerindians and Haitians, that is, they are two mutually independent populations who nevertheless can be united in their common suffering under the European colonial system. Staging his reaction to his reading of Amerindian history, Vastey confirms our suspicion and cries out:

> Hé quoi, m'écriai-je, en terminant cette lecture ? il y a trois cent ans que ces abominations ont été commises, uniquement pour amasser de l'or, et les choses *n'ont point changé* de nos jours ; nous voyons les *mêmes* effets, c'était pour faire du sucre et du café que nos oppresseurs se sont souillés de semblables atrocités ; c'était pour satisfaire l'avarice et la sensualité des colons que nous avons été traités inhumainement, ***et de la même manière que les infortunés indiens***. Voilà donc la funeste origine de la traite des esclaves. ***C'était pour être substitués aux malheureux indiens, pour être condamnés comme eux aux travaux, aux supplices, aux mépris et à la mort, que les européens ont entrepris ce trafic infâme.***[158]
>
> [What ?! I cried out upon finishing this reading. Three hundred years ago these abominations were committed for no other purpose but to amass gold and things *have not changed* in our days; we see the *same* effects, it was in order to produce sugar and coffee that our oppressors have sullied themselves in similar atrocities; it was in order to satisfy the avarice and the sensuality of the colonists that the we have been treated inhumanely, ***and in the same way as those unfortunate Indians.*** We can thus see the murderous origin of the slave trade. ***It was so that we could replace these misfortunate Indians, so that we could be condemned, just as they were, to labors, to tortures, to contempt and to death, that Europeans undertook this despicable trade.*****]**

[158] Vastey, pp. 11-13. My emphasis.

Vastey is thus quite explicit; the two populations are linked—enchaînés—in a logic of substitution which cannot, I believe, help but evoke Paul Ricoeur's theorization of the succession of generations. "The notion of a succession of generations provides an answer to this antinomy by designating the chain of historical agents as living people *who come to take the place* of dead people" (Ricoeur, 109, emphasis mine)[159]. Ricoeur's idiom is almost too fortuitous. Vastey's African-born *displaced* slaves are thus the living that are brought to *replace* the unfortunate exterminated Amerindians and who are made to *take their place* not only in the network of transatlantic labor, but the very soil upon which that labor would *take place*: Haiti. It goes without saying that the not any living population can succeed a fallen population and claim to be its historical surrogate—American mythic genealogy, after all, follows the trace of ancestry back to the English, not the Native Americans. But, what I am suggesting is that since the idea of historical substitution, assumed and articulated as such, is a constitutive element in the structure of the logic of generational succession, it opens up the possibility of thinking through the questions of a genealogy, however fictive and non-reproductive it may be, that Haitians may have used to posit their relationship to the past and to their shared ancestry.

In one relatively oft-cited passage, Vastey dramatizes this confrontation between himself—as a member of the living—the remains of the Amerindian dead, and Haiti, the stage upon which the recognition of succession and place-taking takes place.

[159] Ricoeur, Paul. *Time and Narrative.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988. p.109.

> *Ô terre de mon pays !* en est-il une sur le globe qui ait été plus imbibée de sang humain ? En est-il une où ***les malheureux habitants*** aient éprouvé plus d'infortunes ? Partout où je porte mes pas, où je fixe mes regards, je vois des débris, des vases, des ustensiles, des figures qui portent dans leurs formes l'empreinte et les traces de l'enfance de l'art ; plus loin dans les lieux écartés et solitaires, dans les cavernes des montagnes inaccessibles, *je découvre en frémissant, des squelettes encore tout entiers, des ossements humains épars et blanchis par le temps ; en arrêtant mes pensées sur ces tristes restes, sur ces débris qui attestent l'existence d'un peuple qui n'est plus*, mon cœur s'émeut, je répands des larmes de compassion et d'attendrissement sur ***le malheureux sort des premiers habitants de cette île*** ! Mille souvenirs déchirants viennent assiéger mon cœur ; *une foule de réflexions absorbent mes pensées et se succèdent rapidement* ; *il existait donc ici avant nous des hommes ! ils ne sont plus, voilà leurs déplorables restes ! ils ont été détruits* ![160]
>
> [*Oh, dearest land of my nation.* Is there a land upon the globe that has drunk up more human blood? Is there a land where ***misfortunate inhabitants*** have experienced more hardship? Wherever I might set foot, wherever I might gaze, I see the debris, vases, utensils, figurines that bear witness in their forms to the mark and traces of the infancy of art; a bit farther away in isolated and solitary sites, in the caverns of inaccessible mountains, *I discover, with great terror, skeletons that are still complete, human remains that have been scattered and bleached by time; in arresting my thoughts upon these tragic remnants, upon the debris that attests to the existence of a people that is no longer*, my heart is moved, I cry tears of compassion and affection for the ***unfortunate fate of the first inhabitants of this island*****!** A thousand harrowing memories come and besiege my heart; *a host of reflections absorb my thoughts in rapid succession; it is undeniable then: before us, here, other men existed! They are no longer, look upon their deplorable remains! They have been destroyed!*]

Vastey's emotional reflection on the suffering that has been inflicted on the inhabitants of Haiti throughout history thus begins, notably, with an appropriation of the island ("Ô terre de mon pays"; ["Oh, dearest land of my nation"]). The opening apostrophe—as with the passage's frequent use of the first person and repeated exclamations—may indeed serve to place the excerpt in the register of something like the personal lyric, but it does more than that. Very quickly it becomes clear that the soil, though not an ocular witness to the fate of the anonymous misfortunate populations, nevertheless bears witness to them in the blood they have spilled and that it has drunk up[161]; the vestiges of Amerindian life become the overly visible traces of

[160] Vastey, pp. 3-4. My emphasis.

[161] Though this is not the place for such a reflection, the links between succession, memory, blood and drink have already been articulated in the Christian West. "And he took bread, gave thanks and broke

their non-existence because the land still bears them for the eye to see ("*partout où je porte mes pas, partout où je fixe mes regards"*; ["wherever I might set foot, wherever I might gaze"]). As Vastey moves from the shards of the cultural and artistic remnants of the Amerindians to their fully preserved skeletal remains, he comes to the heart-sundering realization that these people simply do not exist anymore ("ces débris attestent de l'existence d'un peuple *qui n'est plus*"; ["the debris that attests to the existence of a people *that is no longer*"]). The Amerindians, in other words, come to represent the terrifying threat of non-existence.

However, if we are to follow Ricoeur, the living—a haunted Vastey weeping over skeletons blanched by history—must see themselves as taking the place of the dead in order for us to claim that an implicit logic of the succession of generations is at work here. The annihilation of the Amerindian population of 'Haiti' causes Vastey to refer to them as the unfortunate *first inhabitants* of the island ("le malheureux sort des premiers habitants de cette île"; ["the unfortunate fate of the first inhabitants of this island"]), but we can read this label against the previous mention in which the ground of Haiti has seen so many anonymous, unspecified unfortunate inhabitants ("les malheureux habitants"). Read in this way, the misfortune of the Amerindians becomes the original but not—as Vastey's enumeration of the violence committed against the slave body emphatically demonstrates—exclusive link in a chain of suffering. However, we need not rely solely on an implicit logic of series; Vastey explicitly articulates the connection between his shaken living self and the remains of

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it, and gave it to them saying, 'This is my body, given for you; do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way, after the supper he took the cup saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.'" (Luke 22: 19-20).

the Amerindian dead. "Il existait donc ici avant nous des hommes! Ils ne sont plus, voilà leurs déplorables restes! Ils ont été détruits" ["It is undeniable then: before us, here, other men existed! They are no longer; look upon their deplorable remains! They have been destroyed]" (Vastey, 4)! The spatio-temporal coordinates of the relation are nearly all present in the first utterance: *Before us—here—there were other men.* It only remains to show that these other men have disappeared. Here, as elsewhere, this is attested to not by their tremendous absence, but by the overwhelming presence of their remains which he presents to the reader in the mode of the (eye)witness: ("voilà"). Ultimately, then, the flood of memories which come to besiege Vastey's heart (cf. Vastey, 4), are those are of the reconstituted recollection of succession: more than the first inhabitants of the island, the Amerindians were the people that came *and died* before them and whose place, upon the blood-saturated land of 'Haiti', they have now taken.

What is rather notable given the brevity of Vastey's reflections on the Amerindians—a mere thirteen pages are devoted to summarizing the writings of the Spanish chroniclers—is the extent to which Vastey anticipates the historical actors that will be predominately figured in later, more developed Haitian accounts of their predecessors. Vastey focuses his abridged history on the tragic fates of the warrior Caonabo; his wife, poet and chieftain in her own right, Anacaona; and, Henri, "the last of the Caciques," the symbol of successful resistance against the Spanish. Furthermore, Vastey's account is important in that he is perhaps the first—others will follow—to reach to a logic of analogy to explain the fate of historical actors of the extremely recent Haitian Revolution—recall that Vastey's text is published in 1814—

in terms of the abuses committed against the Amerindians of 'Haiti.' "Caonabo, qui, arrêté par surprise et chargé de fers, avait été déporté en Espagne. […] Le malheureux, *il éprouva le même sort de l'infortuné Toussaint Louverture»* [Caonabo, who was arrested by surprise and weighed down with chains, was deported to Spain. […] Oh ill-fated one; *he suffered the same fate as the unfortunate Toussaint Louverture*"] (8, emphasis mine). The language of common misfortune and the insistence on the self-similarity of the histories[162], so characteristic of the passages we have just analyzed at length, has now been given a historical specificity; stripped of their anonymity—we are no longer talking about scattered bone fragments—Vastey seems to suggest that the recent revolutionary past becomes intelligible through the recounting of precise scenes of Amerindian history.

Given this framework, there is little ground left to cover to understand Vastey's closing remarks and the call to rally around the Northern monarch, King *Henri* Christophe. For, after all is said and done, is not one of the markers of the succession of generations the inheritance of the proper name—that which is given but not chosen, accepted but ever renewed.

> Rallions-nous autour ***du grand Henry*** [Christophe], de ce bon père, qui emploie toute sa sollicitude à faire le bonheur de la famille haïtienne, dont tous les membres sont ses enfants ; lui seul conduira le vaisseau de la liberté et de l'indépendance à port, qui pourrait en douter ? *à cette conformité du nom avec* ***le cacique Henry****, qui sauva du naufrage les premiers haïtiens.*[163]
>
> ["Let us rally around ***the great Henry*** [Christophe], around this good father who takes such care to make the Haitian family and all of its members, his children, happy; only he can lead the ship of liberty and independence to port. Who could doubt it, *given the similarity with the name of the* ***Cacique Henry****, who saved the first Haitians from shipwreck.*"]

[162] Compare, for example, Vastey's use of the adjective "même" here and in the passage cited at length.
[163] Vastey, p.92. My emphasis.

More than simply reiterating a paternalism present in other early Haitian political texts[164], by placing Henry in the position of the father of the great Haitian family, Vastey not only projects a chain of theoretical succession into the future—which consolidates the king's claim to political power in the present—but also, and evidently, presents Christophe with an Amerindian antecedent, a predecessor to whom he is, himself, the successor. Given time, Vastey suggests, Henry [Christophe] will be to Haiti what Henri [Cacique] was to the land of 'Haiti'; more compelling than the link between Caonabo and Toussaint because of the identity in their names, Henri comes to be the substitution for the Henri that is no more and the Amerindian past comes to speak not only for the recent past, but to serve as the model for future action.

II: Theorizing the End after the End : Nau and the Histoire des Caciques d'Haïti (1854)

If the columns of the newspaper *Le Moniteur* are to be believed, the mid-nineteenth century publication of Emile Nau's *Histoire des Caciques d'Haïti* (1854) caused quite the literary stir. "This book, we have no doubt about it, will be read with the most lively interest, because it contains the most moving pages, and because it justly fills in a gap which existed in the general history of our country" (Nau, 2)[165]. Perhaps, though, the excitement was justified. Even to this day, it is impossible to discuss the ways in which the history of the indigenous population of 'Haiti' came to

[164] I am thinking both in terms of how the figure of the father is deployed onto the family-nation as well as the paternalist tensions Fischer and others have noted in the early Haitian constitutions. See in particular: Article 15 of Toussaint Louverture's 1801 Constitution of Saint-Domingue and Article 14 of the Haitian Constitution of 1805 in Janvier, Louis Joseph. *Les Constitutions d'Haïti.* Paris: C. Marpon et E. Flammarion, 1886. pp. 10, 32. And, Fischer, p. 228.

[165] The citation is taken from the Avant-Propos of the 2nd Edition of Nau's *Histoire.* The original article can be found in *Le Moniteur* 27 January 1855. My translation.

be understood and largely circulated—especially, though not exclusively, in fictional accounts—without referencing Nau's enduring, nearly 400-page account of the Amerindians of aboriginal Haiti. The text not only established several idiosyncratic features which would form the basis of the grammar for later 'Amerindian-inspired' works[166], but also served to expand the theorizations of the relationship between the Amerindian and Haitian communities and histories that we first saw emerge in Dessalines and Vastey. However, since our particular interest in this chapter lies in the way in which the organizational categories of historical time become articulated through the notion of the Haitian inheritance of the Amerindians, I first turn to Nau's preface and his explicit historical reflections.

> *L'Histoire entière d'Haïti jusqu'à ce jour se divise bien nettement en quatre périodes* : d'abord, celle de la découverte où s'opère l'envahissement du pays par la race européenne et où nous voyons la population aborigène rapidement dévorée par la conquête ; la seconde, celle de la colonisation et de l'introduction de la race africaine, *où Haïti devient Saint-Domingue* ; la troisième, *époque du conflit de deux races, des maîtres et des esclaves*, puis celle de la classe intermédiaire des libres et des affranchis, celle de l'émancipation générale suivie de la tentative du rétablissement de la servitude et de la guerre de l'Indépendance ; *la quatrième, enfin, celle du triomphe des indigènes, de la liberté, et de la nationalité haïtiennes, où Saint-Domingue **re**devient Haïti*.[167]
>
> ["*The entire history of Haiti until the present can be divided rather nicely into four periods* : first, the period of the discovery during which the invasion of the country by the European race takes place and in which we quickly see the aboriginal population be consumed by the conquest; the second, that of colonization and of the introduction of the African race, *when Haiti becomes Saint-Domingue*; the third, *the period of conflict between the two races, between masters and slaves*, and later that of the intermediate class of free and freed persons of color, the period of general emancipation followed by the attempt to re-establish slavery, and the war of Independence; *the fourth, at last, that of the triumph of the indigenes, of liberty, and of Haitian nationality, when Saint-Domingue becomes Haiti once more*."]

Despite the differences in where the demarcations of periodization occur, and what justifications are given to fix them, it is as clear here, as it was for Vastey, and as

[166] Jacques Roumain's « Contribution à l'étude de l'ethnobotanique précolombienne des Grandes Antilles » (1942), as one example among many, simply cannot be accounted for without Nau's Annex, « Flore Indienne d'Haïti. »

[167] Nau, p.11. My emphasis.

it will be for others later, that the History of Haiti—what Nau is calling here, "l'histoire entière d'Haïti"—always already includes an account of the destruction of the Amerindians of the island. What I am suggesting is that we need not reach for a deconstructive logic of external/internal or of 'the supplement' to account for the presence of the Amerindians in the Haitian historical record, as one might perhaps expect, because Nau simply incorporates them, seemingly self-evidently at first, in the original period. But there are other curious choices in Nau's periodization which, if we are thinking ahead to how his narrative may articulate the relationship between Aboriginal Haitians and modern Haitians, may prove important. Note, for example, that it is only in the 2nd period, after the destruction of the Amerindian population, that the importation of African slaves begins; such a view, while not entirely at odds with the place of the first period in this history, certainly introduces a now familiar tension that questions the possibility of Amerindian survival and inheritance.

However, Nau's periodization serves not only to organize the events which make up Haiti's now overly continuous history[168], but the works that have been written detailing those histories. In fact, as he will go on to say in his preface, other historians have already written great works detailing the third (Revolutionary) and fourth (independent) periods of Haitian history but that, finding the first period largely outside of the scope of their writing, have not given it the attention that it properly

[168] I am thinking of the largely recurring historical discontinuity that, in affixing the end of the Amerindian period to the beginning of the period of slave importation, concatenates the initial importation of slavery with large-scale plantation monoculture. In so doing, it excises the process by which this practice emerged and the entire period by which Spanish Saint-Domingo became French Saint-Domingue.

deserved[169]. And to the extent that Nau reinscribed the project of recounting the first period as a project of Haitian nationalism, "qu'un écrivain haïtien entreprenne maintenant de retracer la période de la colonisation, voilà toute l'histoire d'Haïti édifiée par des mains haïtiennes" ["let a Haitian scholar now take on the task of recounting the period of colonization, and then the whole of Haitian history shall be edified by Haitian hands"] (12), the Spanish chronicles could never have sufficed. Indeed, Nau was not incorrect in stating that, although previous historians seemed to understand the importance of the Amerindian period, they did not dwell extensively on it. The historian Thomas Madiou (1814-1884), who devoted a chapter on the period (1492-1630), and who stated that the history of Haiti was unintelligible without the period of Spanish colonization[170], nevertheless devoted only a few more pages than Vastey or Ardouin to the tragedy of the Amerindians.

Having justified the place of his intervention in Haitian historical scholarship, Nau must still, and this is critically important for our work, justify his choice of subject in spite of the tension we have already briefly highlighted in his periodization. In other words, how, given the fact that the nomenclature assigned to the fourth period asserts the fact that 'Haiti' was always the name of the island and "Saint-Domingue" a brutal colonial aberration, can the Andersonian logic of inheritance, coexist with the

[169] Nau, p. 12.

[170] "Pour l'intelligence de cette histoire, il a été nécessaire qu'elle fût précédée d'un exposé rapide des événements qui ont suivi la découverte de notre île et qui ont amené l'extinction de la race aborigène, la transplantation des Africains, la colonisation française ». ["In order for our history to be intelligible, it has been necessary for it to be preceded by a rapid account of the events that followed the discovery of our island and which led to the extinction of the aboriginal race, the transplantation of Africans, and French colonization."] Madiou, Thomas. *Histoire d'Haïti.* Port-au-Prince : Imprimerie de Jr. Courtois, 1847. p. i. For his account of the Amerindian period see « Livre premier: De 1492 à 1630" in Madiou, pp. 1-14.

temporally discontinuous nature of these populations? To answer this question, then, Nau must begin to address the structures underlying the kinship between the Amerindians and the citizens of the black Republic, because only then can he speak to the incorporation of their history into his project of nationalist historiography.

> *Il est vrai que nous ne sommes pas les descendants des aborigènes d'Haïti*, que nous sommes d'une autre race ; *que nous n'avons rien à démêler, à titre d'héritiers immédiats*, à leurs mœurs, à leur civilisation, à leurs destinées ; *que nous ne nous sentons liés à eux par aucune sympathie de consanguinité*. *Mais le fait d'habiter aujourd'hui le pays où ils vécurent nous oblige, nous plus que personne, à nous enquérir de nos prédécesseurs*. Pouvons-nous ignorer les origines et le passé de notre pays, l'histoire si pathétique et si lamentable de *ce peuple intéressant dont les derniers rejetons ont été les compagnons de servitude de nos premiers ancêtres sur ce sol. L'Africain et l'Indien se sont donné la main dans les chaînes. Voilà par quelle confraternité de malheur*, par quelle communauté de souffrances, leurs destinées se trouvent mêlées.[171]
>
> ["*It is true that we are not the descendants of the aboriginals of Haiti*, that we are of another race ; *that we have no claims, as immediate inheritors*, to their customs, to their civilization, to their destinies; *that we do not feel tied to them by any sympathy of consanguinity whatsoever*. *But the fact of living today in the country where they once lived forces us, more than anyone else, to enquire about our predecessors.* Can we remain ignorant of the origins and the past of our country, the touching and tragic history of *this remarkable people whose final offspring were the companions in servitude of our first ancestors on this land? The African and the Indian held hands in chains. And it is by this confraternity of misfortune*, by this community of suffering, that their destinies are found to be interwoven."]

Nau commences this brilliantly crafted passage on the defensive, with a series of seemingly difficult admissions on the limits of the ties that should bind Haitians to the Amerindians. In fact, even though the first confession should suffice to end the conversation—*we are not descendants of the aboriginal Haitians*—it is only the beginning of a triple denial of kinship. Not only are Haitians unrelated *by blood* to the first inhabitants, but, and perhaps more importantly, Haitians are not the immediate inheritors of any aboriginal cultural legacy[172], after all, did Dessalines not violently

[171] Nau, pp. 13-4. My emphasis.

[172] Throughout his text Nau will weaken this perhaps rhetorically exaggerated position. In his appendix, "De la langue et littérature des aborigènes, » Nau will argue that elements of Haitian

object, in the 1804 Proclamation, to the fact that everything still bore the mark of a galling Gallic inheritance[173]. So it is not surprising, then, to find Nau admitting that, given the lack of any shared genetic or cultural material, that his contemporaries did not feel any of the *sympathy of consanguinity* with the Indians or the unfortunate fate that befell them.

And yet, if the Haitians are not the *descendants* of the Aboriginal inhabitants of the island, Nau is quite unequivocal in noting that these same 'first inhabitants' are nevertheless the *predecessors* to modern Haitians. The condition of possibility of a shared history begins, for Nau, with the realization of a diachronic structure wherein the Haitian soil provides the ground for the recognition of a relation across time. "Mais, le fait d'habiter aujourd'hui le pays où ils vécurent, nous oblige […] » ["But the fact of living today in the country where they once lived, forces us…"]. Much as in Vastey, the collocation in space conjoined with the discrepancy in time creates the sense of obligation and debt that is owed to the first inhabitants, and the justification of their status as predecessors.

However, unlike Vastey, who was haunted by the deaths that had long preceded his macabre promenades, Nau introduces a tension in the diachronic nature of the relation—and against his own periodization—by noting that the last of the Indians were *contemporaneous* with the first Africans brought to Spanish colony. It is in this partnership of servitude, this meeting in chains, that the destinies of the

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cuisine, as well as certain dances and chants falsely believed to be Haitian in origin should actually be attributed to the Amerindians. Nau, pp. 323-4.

[173] « Tout y retrace le souvenir des cruautés de ce peuple barbare : nos lois, nos mœurs, nos villes, tout encore porte l'empreinte française » ["Everything serves as a reminder of the cruelty of this barbarous people : our laws, our customs, our cities, everything still bears the mark of the French."] Proclamation of 1804.

populations become, through the recognition of their mutual suffering, forever interlaced.[174] In other words, whereas Vastey was content with establishing a logic of succession upon a shared land and on the recognition that the European colonial system had exacted a tremendous toll on human life—both Amerindian and African—Nau's backwards glance attempts to resolve the historical difficulties of transplantation and plantation slavery by grafting the history of the enslaved onto the history of the Amerindians at precisely that point where it would seem relatively historically permissible, the period of historical overlap. For me, this passage, the very moment of which we have been speaking, contains within it a crisis in narrative time. As Nau imagines a community of suffering ("quelle communauté de souffrance"), and restructures his history accordingly, we find that the earlier "sympathie de consanguinité" which Nau had denied between the two populations, has become a "confraternité de malheur"—evoking kinship and inheritance even as it denies it. In order to confirm this, however, let us leave the preface and turn our attention to the inner workings of Nau's text; in particular as we go forward I would like to examine the discrepancies, incongruities, and difficulties in narration and narrative time as Nau comes to relate the tale of Henri, so-called, "last of the Indian chieftains."

[174] The nineteenth century poet and playwright, Massillon Coicou, perhaps drawing on this seemingly mythic, indemonstrable moment in Nau's argument, stages this encounter between the last of the Indians ("L'Indien") and a recently transplanted African slave, "L'Africain," in his one-act play, *L'oracle.* "[L'indien]: 'Pour moi, dans ce baiser le dernier de nos âmes,/ dans cette fraternelle étreinte de mes bras. / Je meurs…/ Mais souviens-toi !' [L'Africain] : 'Le vengeur…tu l'auras' ». ["(The Indian) : 'For me, in this final kiss, the last of our souls,/ in this fraternal embrace, in my arms./ I'm dying…/ But remember!' (The African): 'Your avenger…in me you will find.''] Coicou, Massillon. *L'oracle : poème dramatique haïtien.* Paris : Ateliers Haïtiens, 1901. p. 50.

Allegories of the Haitian Revolution: Foundational Fictions of Kinship?

For Sibylle Fischer, the Cacique Henri also emerges as an important figure but for slightly different reasons. Reading Nau's *Histoire des Caciques d'Haïti* against the evolution of the citizenship clauses of the early Haitian constitutions, Fischer concludes that Nau along with the Constitution of 1843[175], with their articulation of a 'transethnic alliance' between the Amerindians and those of African descent, point to a shifting understanding of Haitian nationalism and citizenship. "If the earlier idea was that of Haiti as a liberated territory—a kind of safe haven for anyone who was escaping genocide and slavery—the new idea of Haiti is the land of those who avenged the Indians and acquired a special right of residence" (Fischer, 244). This novel understanding of the right of territorial inheritance bestowed upon Haitians, is mirrored, she argues—and this will be important for our reading—in the historical emplotment, the narrative inheritance, in which Nau relates the tale of Henri. "This act of inheriting is literally performed in certain parallels between the indigenous chieftain Henri and the leaders of the Haitian Revolution. […] Nau slowly turns the tale of Henri's uprising into an allegory of the Haitian Revolution, with one crucial difference: where Henri failed, the Haitians succeeded" (243-4).

While I largely agree with the spirit of Fischer's analysis, I nevertheless question portions of the argument on two related, but separate, counts. On the one hand, though I agree that parts of Nau's text are indeed to be read as 'allegorical' reinterpretations of several critical moments or historical actors of the Haitian

[175] Following in the footsteps of Article 44 of the Constitution of 1816, the Constitution of 1843 still notes the population of Africans and Amerindians that may qualify for Haitian citizenship but is much more explicit as to its criteria. See, in particular, Fischer, pp. 238, 241.

Revolution—in this, her use of the word 'parallels,' strikes me as precise and conscientious[176]—it is not immediately clear that this tendency towards allegory is restricted *only* to the retelling of the tale of Henri's resistance against the Spanish. Rather, I would argue that much of Nau's narrative would give the reader an uncanny sense of *déjà lu*.

As the examples needed to fully flesh out this claim, if fully engaged with individually, would be too numerous and would cause us to deviate too sharply from the central point, I provide only a sketch of the argument here. We could begin by examining the ways in which the Amerindians are portrayed as resisting the Spanish, be it through marooning into the hills[177] or the use of song as a coded, Glissantian detour[178], but it is most readily evident in Nau's depiction of the history's antagonists. Take, for example, this depiction of the typical Spanish *colon* which appears to me not only as a caustic retort to those Europeans who balked at the idea of nobilities of color under Christophe but which also sounds as if it were modeled on Moreau de Saint-Méry's description of the demographics of French colonial Saint-Domingue.

> A ce prix, tout petit colon s'érigeait en maître et grand seigneur. C'était une féodalité bâtarde, grossière, sans frein, une parodie qui est devenue sérieuse, de la féodalité européenne. […] Les maîtres ne marchaient plus à pied, pour peu que le but d'une course ou d'une promenade fût éloigné. Ils ne voyageaient plus à cheval, les chevaux étant rares ; ils se faisaient porter en litière par leurs esclaves. C'était pour eux un luxe d'avoir toujours plus de porteurs qu'il n'en était besoin, et de se faire éventer,

[176] « A more standard interpretation defines allegory as a narrative with two parallel levels of signification. These are temporally differentiated, with one revealing or "repeating" the anterior level of meaning." Sommer, Doris. *Foundational Fictions: The National Romances of Latin America.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991. pp. 42-3.

[177] « Ce qui aggravait la position des Colons, c'était l'abandon des cultures des environs, causé par le mécontentement des Indiens, leur désertion et leur fuite dans les montagnes » ["What made the position of the Colonists worse was the fact that the Indians, owing to their profound unhappiness, had abandoned the surrounding fields, deserting them and fled into the mountains"] Nau, pp. 165-6. See also : Nau, pp. 248, 280.

[178] Nau, p. 141.

> tout en cheminant, avec de larges feuilles de palmiers que les esclaves agitaient au-dessus de leur couche.[179]
>
> ["At this price, any minor colonist raised himself to the level of master and great lord. It was a crude, unbridled, and misbegotten feudalism, a parody of European feudalism that became serious. […] The masters no longer walked on foot, regardless of how short the distance of the walk was. They no longer travelled by horse, horses being rare as they were; they made their slaves carry them in litters. For them it was a luxury to always have more persons to carry them than was necessary, and to have themselves fanned during their journey with large palm fronds that the slaves moved about above their beds."]

Similarly, and importantly for the point I am trying to make here, Nau presents Nicolas Ovando, fifteenth century governor of the Indies, as the violent, Spanish predecessor to other European aggressors. "Il est le premier de ces hommes de sang, venus d'Europe, qui ont laissé sur la terre d'Haïti une réputation ineffaçable d'horreur et de scélératesse » ["He is the first of these brutal men from Europe who have left an ineffaceable reputation of horror and villainy on the land of Haiti"] (Nau, 220). Those sufficiently familiar with the Haitian Revolution, however, could hear only one name in such a dangerous enumeration of moral failings and colonial 'accomplishments'. Nau will not hesitate to make the parallel explicit. "La mémoire d'Ovando serait exécrée dans la dernière postérité des aborigènes d'Haïti, s'ils n'avaient pas tous péri, autant que celle de Rochambeau est jusqu'à ce jour odieuse aux Haïtiens » ["The memory of Ovando would be as abhorred in the last posterity of the aboriginals of Haiti, if they had not all perished, as the memory of Rochambeau is to this very day odious to Haitians"] (222). Thus, while I would agree with Fischer in saying that the portion of the text recounting Henri's uprising bears an allegorical relationship with

[179] Nau, p. 218.

the events of the Haitian Revolution[180], I would further state that this is partially because the larger text, as I have briefly attempted to show here, does so as well. After all, isn't part of the indignation that we are meant to feel, as interpellated Haitian readers, at learning that the Spanish utilized flesh-eating dogs against the Amerindians, always already the indignation that we felt upon learning that General Rochambeau, in fighting his race war against the revolutionary Haitians, yielded to the same murderous instinct[181]?

And yet, let me phrase the problem in a different way. If, as Fischer has suggested, the tale of Henri's uprising, or at least its conclusion, is the moment where the allegorical parallels between the Amerindians and the Haitians become most evident, it is *also* the very moment where the logic of historical parallel absolutely falters. "Nau slowly turns the tale of Henri's uprising into an allegory of the Haitian Revolution, with one crucial difference: where Henri failed, the Haitians succeeded" (Fischer, 244). At issue, then, are the related notions of 'failure' and 'success,' which become for Fischer, as we can clearly see, the historical outcomes—something like the historemes—that signify the temporal gap between one narrative and its parallel, the essential ground not only for allegorical narrative more generally, but the justification of the specific territorial inheritance of Haitians. However, just as the postcolonial laments of the Dessalinian Proclamation of 1804 might force us to question the

[180] Note, for example, the sudden appearance of terms common to the later phases of the Revolution, such as "armée expéditionnaire" and "insurgés." Nau, p. 238.

[181] "Les Espagnols s'étaient adjoint un étrange auxiliaire, des chiens de combat dressés au carnage. […] Les chiens dévoraient à belles dents. Il était facile à reconnaître, à leurs gosiers arrachés, et à leurs ventres ouverts qui avaient vomi les entrailles, les victimes de ces bêtes féroces. » ["The Spanish had taken on a strange ally, fighting dogs trained for carnage. […] The dogs devoured their prey with ferocity. It was easy to spot, from their torn throats and from stomachs that lay open, vomiting entrails, the victims of these ferocious beasts."]Nau, pp. 136, 138.

unfinished nature of Haitian Revolutionary projects—its unquestionable 'success', if you will—it is not immediately clear from Nau's concluding chapters, that Henri 'failed.' In fact, I would contend that Henri's life and his struggles against the Spanish are actually related as a *success* and it is this success, so inassimilable to the parallels with Haitian Revolutionary history that brings Nau's narrative to its ambiguous conclusion.

Before moving to the specific details and narratological anomalies that appear in Nau's account of Henri, however, it may be productive to briefly summarize the relevant biographical content of his life. Miraculous survivor of the same massacre that would claim the lives of so many in the Xaragua province—including the legendary Anacaona—the young Henri, himself of royal indigenous blood, was taken in by Dominican monks and brought to a convent in Santo-Domingo where he received an exemplary instruction[182]. Though he was ultimately seized from within the sacred confines of the convent and enslaved, Henri, unable to entertain the sustained mistreatment he suffered under his second master, Valenzuela, abandons the territory of his master alongside several other slaves[183]. When he is pursued by an armed and resilient Valenzuela, Henri organizes his band of 'maroon' slaves and succeeds not only in defending the personal liberty of his followers but in providing a notable demonstration of the capabilities of organized slave resistance to the nearby slave-owners and their slaves[184]. With the passage of time, Henri comes to be the appointed Cacique for a rogue territory that remains largely outside of Spanish control.

[182] Nau, p. 281.
[183] Nau, p. 282.
[184] Nau, p. 283-4.

Largely limiting his military actions to the defense of those ever-increasing numbers of runaway slaves which have taken refuge under his rule, Henri acquires the undeniably moral upper-hand against his Spanish adversaries[185]. Henri's resistance is ultimately so *successful* in staving off repeated attempts at re-enslavement that his informally recognized quasi-autonomy is only threatened when he receives a missive from the Emperor Charles V himself. In the letter, the Emperor offered a guarantee of liberty to all of his followers if he would only abandon his insurrectionary activities, threatening that a refusal would only be answered with the full force of Spanish military might[186]. Henri's acceptance of the Emperor's offer signals the end of his military resistance and the beginning of the reintegration of the runaway Indians into the greater colonial population. Having taken his solemn 'Dessalinian' oath to die rather than to live under Spanish subjugation at its most serious, Henri succeeded in securing important concessions from the highest echelons of Spanish power. When we read on and discover that Henri "meurt paisiblement et obscurément" ["dies peacefully and in obscurity"], we are left to wonder where in all of this we are to find the 'failure' (314)?

To be clear, I am arguing that the tale of Henri *is* crucial to the ways in which Nau articulates the historical link—fictional filiations or not—between the Haitian population and their Amerindian 'predecessors,' as Nau called them in his preface. However, I hope to have shown that this is neither because the life of Henri alone is related in allegorical terms to the Haitian Revolution nor because Henri's anticolonial praxis is immediately, or even demonstrably, legible as a 'failure.' Rather, I would

[185] Nau, p. 287-8.
[186] Nau, p. 299.

like to argue that what makes the chapters devoted to Henri exceptional is the temporal suturing bookending the narrative; in many respects, Henri and his followers are caught somewhere between the post-script of Amerindian history and the preface of African Atlantic history. Unable to stage the foundational moment when the two histories become interlinked in the "confraternity of suffering," Nau's text remains deeply unsure of where to end his history. The uncertainty of the text with respect to what constitutes the dividing line of "the past," explains, in part, why Fischer's terminology of 'failure,' and the concomitant 'allegory' which it generates, is ultimately ill-equipped to articulate the text's enigmatic closing passages.

Nau's account is punctuated by several rather spectacular moments of 'failure'—attributed here to innate racial insufficiencies of the Amerindians, there to the moral failings of the Spanish—but few threaten the basis of the historical account as much as the 1504 hanging of the Cacique Cotubanama, so-called *last of the Caciques.*

> Telle fut la fin du dernier des caciques d'Haïti que les conquérants, à leur arrivée, trouvèrent régnant sur leurs libres peuplades. Dès lors, la domination espagnole s'étendit sur toute l'île, et les seuls aborigènes indépendants qui y existassent alors furent ceux, en petit nombre d'ailleurs, qui, fuyant la servitude, se retirèrent dans les montagnes les plus inaccessibles de l'intérieur. S'agglomérant à peine, ils y vivaient affranchis de toute autorité, mais en fugitifs errant sans cesse de retraite en retraite.[187]
>
> [And such was the end of the last of the Caciques of Haiti that the conquerors had found reigning over their tribes upon their arrival. From then on Spanish domination extended upon the entire island and the only independent aboriginals that could be found there were those, few in number, that, having fled servitude, had withdrawn into the most inaccessible mountains of the interior. Barely gathering together, they lived free of all authority but also as fugitives, constantly wandering from hideout to hideout.]

Now, there is nothing surprising in noting that after violently dismantling the institutions by which the Amerindians delegated power and authority—namely, the

[187] Nau, p. 248.

system of Caciquats—that the unchecked Spaniards would extend their influence throughout the island; what *is* surprising from a narrative point of view, however, is that Cotubanama, the last of the Caciques, *precedes* by several years, the tale of Henri, for whom Nau recycles the otherwise singular ordinal. That is, Henri—and not only the Haitians that will later be reading about him—already occupies, in many respects, a time *after the Amerindians*. In other words, the 'failure' of the Amerindians, whether we define it as the loss of territorial sovereignty ("la domination espagnole s'étendit sur *toute* l'île"; ["Spanish domination extended upon the entire island"]) or as the expansion of Amerindian enslavement, evident in the rise of fugitive maroons, had *already* been realized. Living in the wake of near-total racial extermination, awaiting only *the foreseeable end*, Henri's goals could be expressed neither in the language of radical anticolonialism nor in an idiom of universal liberty as ends in and of themselves, for it is *the end*, so visible on the horizon of expectation, that justifies the violent but ultimately constrained resistance offered by Henri. "Leur destruction était inévitable. Ils le savaient bien; mais ils se dévouaient à une fin glorieuse. Que les derniers aborigènes périssent au moins libres. […] [Ils] obtinrent enfin une paix honorable qu'ils stipulèrent sous les termes d'une entière liberté pour les derniers rejetons de leur race » ["Their destruction was inevitable. They knew it well; but they had devoted themselves to a glorious end. That the last of the aboriginals at least perish in freedom. […] [They] finally obtained an honorable peace that they stipulated under the terms of a complete liberty for the last descendants of their race"] (280). Read in this way, it is both harder to see the historical applicability of the implicit moral teachings of the tale of Henri's uprising—its allegorical potential—and

easier to see why, of those quasi-canonical historical figures which Haitians continue to cite from this period, Henri lags behind the others. Indeed, I would argue that it is because of his marginal position within Amerindian history—both after the end and gazing in anticipation of it—and not because of any so-called failure on his part, however defined, that the conclusion of Henri's tale and thus of Nau's text, resists any facile allegorical recycling by Haitian historians.

Intuitively, if the interior of Nau's narrative were to contain an explicit theorization of the ties that bind the Haitian and Amerindian populations, we might expect to find a series of reflections in the passages on Henri. Indeed, no sooner has the death of the Cacique Cotubanama (1504), the last significant impediment to Spanish encroachment, been revealed than Nau reminds his reader in the very next paragraph that the African slave trade had already—if only recently—begun (1501). That is, as witnesses to the demise of the governmental, cultural and other wider structures of Amerindian life *and* as fellow victims of the developing system of early modern slavery, the elements are all potentially there for a demonstration of the principles of Nau's preface.

Any supposed alliance between the African and Amerindian populations, however, remains notably allusive within the narrative. Even the conjoined chains and misfortune of slavery seem largely unable to unite the populations. This, I would argue, is largely because Nau, drawing from the ethnohistories available to him, describes the Amerindian population in the disturbingly familiar language of innate

aboriginal physical weakness[188] which cannot but distinguish them from their more 'robust', African counterparts. More importantly, perhaps, as we have seen, the desire to be free of Spanish enslavement was seen by Henri and his followers with one eye on the filling hourglass. "Que les derniers aborigènes périssent au moins libres, » ["That the last of the aboriginals at least perish in freedom"] cannot be used as a universal justification for a transethnic alliance against European colonial slavery.

This is perhaps no more evident than in the moment when the end, the death of the very last of the Caciques, at long last arrives. The temporal difficulty that later literary texts will attempt to alleviate by staging—as Massillon Coicou's *L'oracle* (1901) does so self-evidently and as Nau himself anticipates in the preface—the transfer of the 'Haitian' inheritance from the Amerindians to the newly arrived Africans, the warning of the violence to be expected, the call to vengeance are all absent in Nau's closing account. Indeed, there is absolutely nothing spectacular, significant or even prophetic about the death of the last Amerindian. The end comes not with a bang, but a whimper.

> [Une fois libres] ils étaient quatre mille comme dans leurs montagnes. Ils vivaient, d'abord, isolés de la population coloniale ; puis peu à peu ils s'y mêlèrent, et, peu à peu, ils s'y absorbèrent. Leur histoire finit ici, avec leur vie active. La trace de leur existence s'efface, et on ne peut plus compter chacune qui s'éteint. Elles s'éteignent toutes. Le cacique Henri meurt paisiblement et obscurément. *Et bientôt, à quelques années de là, pas un Indien ne lui survit ; on ne trouve que de rares descendants de cette race dont on démêle à peine quelques traits caractéristiques à travers le mélange plus prononcé du type africain et européen.*[189]
>
> ["[Once free] there were four thousand of them as they had been in the mountains. At first they lived isolated from the colonial population; then, little by little, they began to intermingle with them and then, little by little, they were absorbed by them. Their

[188] "Les descendants de cette race faible, efféminée, en proie à la mollesse de son climat, et faite, on dirait pour vivre dans l'oisiveté ou les plaisirs tranquilles ». ["The descendants of this weak, effeminate race were prey to the sluggishness of their climate, and one might say made to live for idleness or tranquil pleasures."] Nau, p. 287.

[189] Nau, pp. 314-5. My emphasis.

> history ends here with their active life. The trace of their existence is erased and one can no longer count each trace as it is extinguished. They are all put out. The Cacique Henri dies peacefully and obscurely. *And soon, a few years later, not a single Indian survives him; one finds only the odd, rare descendent of this race from which one can barely distinguish a few characteristic traits from the more pronounced mixture of the African and the European."*]

Not only is there no mention of the possible contact between the no-longer enslaved population of Amerindians and the recently enslaved population of imported Africans, but Nau seems reluctant, as we see here, to assign a significance to their deaths. "Absorbed" into the greater colonial population, they, and all traces of their existence, simply disappeared. It is odd then, as the reader has seen, that the very sentence which signs the final death certificate, also attests to the biological traits enduring, however imperfectly[190], into the present moment of writing. Neither wholly dead—because their traces linger on in their scant descendants—nor alive in a way that is fully recognizable, Nau condenses here in this one moment, the question at the heart of Amerindian inheritance that later literary texts will repeatedly interrogate: what is the temporal nature of the continuity (or of the discontinuity) between the Amerindian and Haitian populations?

Visions of the Cross, Visions of the Future

« S'il est vrai qu'un de leurs oracles avait prédit, bien avant l'arrivée des Espagnols, que des Etrangers envahiraient un jour leur pays et s'en rendraient maîtres par l'extermination de leur race, ils durent s'alarmer de ce malheur comme d'un commencement de réalisation de la fatale prophétie. »[191]

[*"If it is true that one of their oracles had predicated, well before the arrival of the Spaniards, that a foreign presence would one day invade their country and would make themselves the masters of it by the extermination of their race, they must have been alarmed at this misfortune as the beginning of the fulfillment of a fatal prophecy."*]
« "Dorsinville watched the adults he knew sink into "stupor" and then "resignation." "The white soldiers had come to defile our independence : where were the ancestors? Finally the ancestors were no more" »[192]

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[190] « Pas un Indien pur n'est arrivé jusqu'à nos jours. » ["Not one pure Indian has survived to our day."] Nau, p. 315.
[191] Nau, p. 134.

The element of prophecy or revelation, as Léon-François Hoffmann has noted, is a particularly characteristic feature of the fiction inspired by the events of the Amerindian history[193]. Though, as Hoffmann goes on to note, the prophecy in these texts often takes the form of an anticipation of the Haitian Revolution and the vengeance that these former slaves will enact upon the white, European slave-owning population on behalf of the Amerindians. I will address Hoffmann's claim in more detail in the following section, devoted to the literary works of Amerindian inspiration, but, for now, I would like to think through the ways in which Nau's *historical literature* thematizes not the past of ancestry but the futures it envisions as possible because of this ancestry.

It may seem somewhat counterintuitive—or even anachronous—to interrogate a text so concerned with the distant past for what it can tell us about the future that Nau envisioned for his nineteenth century contemporaries. But it is not a futile exercise. After all, we can scan Nau's explicit prefatory and narratorial comments to see what he would have his readers take from their reading of his text. Haitian historian and contemporary to Nau, Thomas Madiou, for example, is quite clear in his preface about the purpose his *Histoire d'Haïti* (1847) was to play in the nation's foreseeable future. "Il est impossible de diriger une société dans les voies du progrès, de lui faire éviter les écueils contre lesquels beaucoup de jeunes peuples se soient brisés, si on n'a pas médité sur les événements passés et dans le monde et dans le pays que l'on veut régénérer » ["It is impossible to lead a society on the path to progress, to

[192] Dubois, p. 216.
[193] Hoffmann, Léon-François. *Haitian Fiction Revisited.* Pueblo, Colo. : Passeggiata Press, 1999. p. 110.

have it avoid the pitfalls to which so many young nations have fallen prey, if one fails to reflect upon the past events both of the world and of the country one seeks to regenerate"] (Madiou, ii). Though we can see a certain tension at the heart of Madiou's concept of the future—somewhere between the open-ended, ever-novel future suggested by "progress", and the repeated iterations of the past from which we can learn—Madiou's future nevertheless remains largely that of the Historia Magistra. But, did Nau have as clear a vision of the future?

If, according to Madiou, societies on the path of progress were responsible for the history of the world as well as the history of the own, Nau denationalizes the formula in inverting it. « Les annales d'Haïti, malgré le peu de place qu'elles paraissent encore tenir dans celles du monde, abordent en enseignements utiles pour l'étude et l'instruction de l'humanité» ["The annals of Haiti, despite the little bit of space that they appear to hold within those of the world, are full of useful teachings for the study and the instruction of humanity"] (Nau, 15-6). Despite the fact that Nau expressed pleasure not only in his treatment of the Amerindian period of Haitian history, but that, *as a Haitian*, the totality of the history of the nation had now been realized by national historians[194], the lessons of that history, as is clear, remain universally applicable. The continued, international utility assumes an anthropological homogeneity across time and space that strongly suggests that Nau, too, saw the future as wedded to the experiences of the past. Furthermore, are the allegorical elements in the previous section not the here-more, there-less felicitous performances of the *Historia magistra* by which the distant past of the Amerindians can be figured as the

[194] Nau, p. 12.

recent past of the revolutionary Haitians? But was this past ever ready to repeat once more into the present moment of writing, the time of Nau, so to speak?

Despite the partial reassurances of an iterable view of history, when it comes to explicitly addressing his expectations for the future, Nau remains relatively muted. "J'ignore les destinées de mon pays," ["I do not know what destiny holds in store for my country,"] states Nau, before noting that what interests him is not the future of the nation, or the lessons it might hold for the future of humanity but a seemingly curatorial instinct to "sauver son histoire de l'oubli" ["save its history from oblivion"] (Nau, 12). This disinterest in the future, however, should not be taken as merely as an aversion but rather as an epistemological break, an acknowledgement that the future remains the dominion of the Divine. « De grands et héroïques peuples, après avoir subi longtemps les épreuves du malheur, ont été comblés enfin par *la Providence*, qui veille sur nous comme elle veilla sur eux, des bienfaits *du progrès et d'une civilisation* puissante et durable. Qui sait l'avenir, et ce que nous réserve *le suprême rémunérateur des sociétés* » ["Great and heroic peoples, after having been subjected to the trials of misfortune for many years, have at last been spoiled by *Providence*, which looks after us as it looked after them, and instills the advantages of *progress and of a powerful and lasting civilization.* Who can know what the future holds, and what the *supreme patron of societies* still has in store for us"] (Nau, 13) ? Though Nau speaks partially in the idiom of an anthropologically-inflected open future ("du progrès et d'une civilisation"), it is more than evident that theological overtones—progress and civilization are presented as gifts from Providence, after all—completely interpenetrate the ways in which Nau understands the unfurling of history. In fact, far

from displacing the limit that the Christianized Historia Magistra had placed on the horizon of expectation for the future, Nau salvages elements of the conceptual apparatus and makes of the last judgment—here an eschatology at the level of the social rather than of the individual—the anticipated telos of his history. By simultaneously fastening the future to the past *and* allowing it a narrow, divinely-sanctioned breach by which time might surreptitiously flow onwards, the future remains contested, at once fully known in its final judgment and yet utterly ineffable.

This tension in the future, I would argue, serves to explain the curious series of remarks by which Nau concludes his text. As in the case of *Stella*—another so-called allegory of the Haitian Revolution—writing near and around the present encounters a remarkable narratological resistance. After all, writing the present—especially in a narrative where the Historia Magistra is a central organizing framework of the categories of time—lends itself to a logic of comparison and sequence which would inevitably gloss the future. Upon concluding that the Amerindian population has been exterminated, Nau takes a moment to discredit the oral folktales circulating in his present which falsely attest to the continued existence of a community of pure, full-bloodied Indians, the "Vienviens"[195]. But he can linger here only the time of a condemnation: "des choses curieuses [répandues] par la naïveté et le grotesque de l'imagination" ["Curious tidbits [spread] by the naiveté and grotesqueness of the imagination"](315). In a move that recalls *Stella*'s frequent analeptic kinesthetics, Nau concludes his text not with any sustained reflection or commentary on the present, but

[195] Nau, p. 315.

rather returns to the temporally problematic 'final' moments of the tribe of the Cacique Henri to offer his own "legend."

> On rapporte que plusieurs d'entre eux, poussés par le repentir d'avoir abjuré leurs anciennes croyances pour la religion catholique, entreprirent d'abattre une grande croix en bois élevé par les Espagnols dans l'enceinte de la ville de Santiago. Ils essayèrent d'abord à l'aide de cordes et de courroies qu'ils nouèrent au sommet de cette croix de la *déraciner du sol* ; ils s'épuisèrent en efforts inutiles : la croix resta inébranlable. Ne pouvant pas réussir par ce moyen ils avisèrent à un autre : ils portèrent la hache sur le *bois sacré*. Chaque morceau qu'ils en détachaient se réparait aussitôt, en sorte qu'après avoir longtemps sapé, la croix demeura intacte. Le miracle était évident, néanmoins, ils n'en crurent pas encore leur impuissance, et ils recoururent à un dernier moyen. Ils dressèrent un bûcher tout autour du monument religieux et y mirent le feu. Les flammes l'enveloppèrent, et semblèrent l'avoir consumé ; mais, lorsqu'il ne resta plus de ce brasier que des cendres, la croix reparut entière et sans la moindre trace de combustion.
> Cette légende ne veut-elle pas dire que la conquête était un fait irrévocablement accompli, et que la religion des conquérants *implantée* sur ce sol, comme cette croix, y dominait et ne pouvait plus en être extirpée ?[196]
>
> [It is said that several among them, driven to repentance for having recanted their previous beliefs in favor of the Catholic faith, took it upon themselves to cut down a large wooden cross that had been placed in the center of the city of Santiago by the Spaniards. At first they attempted, with the aid of ropes and straps that they had tied around the top of the cross, *to uproot it from the ground*; they grew exhausted in these futile efforts: the cross remained unshakable. Unable to succeed in this way, they dared to attempt another: they took an axe to the *sacred wood*. No sooner had they detached a piece than it was instantly repaired, such that after having tried for a long time, the cross remained intact. The miracle was obvious, and yet they did not yet believe in their powerlessness and they resorted to a final attempt. They erected a pyre around the religious monument and set fire to it. Flames enveloped it and appeared to have consumed it; yet, when there was nothing left of the blaze but ashes, the cross reappeared wholly intact and without the slightest trace of combustion.
> Should we not take this legend to mean that the conquest was an irrevocably established fact and that the religion of the conquerors *grafted* onto this soil, like this cross, reigned there and could no longer be *uprooted*?]

While Nau refers to his closing tale as "une vraie légende," I would argue that reading it instead as a fable (broadly conceived)—a move justified both by its narrative economy, marvelous content, and concluding moral—enables us the possibility to make it speak, however elliptically, about a future that would have otherwise remained discursively inaccessible. After all, in condensing the lessons of a counterfactual event into a guide for future action, the morality of the fable, mirrors

[196] Nau, pp. 315-6. My emphasis.

the reflection that, in the logic of the *Historia Magistra*, takes place in the mind of the reader of past historical events. What, then, is the moral?

Before addressing that question directly, I would like to briefly touch upon the uncanny way in which Nau's closing legend revisits the last words uttered by Toussaint Louverture upon his surrender to the French military forces in the summer of 1802. Seeking to minimize the strategic impact of his surrender upon continued antislavery efforts in Saint-Domingue, the lyrical Louverture proferred a dendrologos of freedom that remains infamous to our day: "En me renversant, on n'a abattu à Saint-Domingue, que le tronc de l'arbre de la liberté des noirs; il repoussera par les racines, parce qu'elles sont profondes et nombreuses" ["In cutting me down, you have down nothing but fell the trunk of the tree of the liberty of Blacks in Saint-Domingue; it will sprout once more from its roots, because they are deep and plentiful."] (Césaire, 314).[197] Said another way, antislavery, anticolonial efforts in Saint-Domingue had nothing to fear from losing the military genius and once-controversial colonial governor—that great stabilizing trunk—because the means by which this sentiment of liberty could be reactualized and expressed were still everywhere possible in a *collectively* and *deeply* held conviction.

If Louverture's message was intended to remind his audience about the natural tenacity and force (*racines*) of the anticolonial qua antislavery movement, Nau's final legend serves instead as a memento of the insidious persistence of colonialism in the first place. In Nau, the balance of power has clearly shifted to

[197] Césaire, Aimé. *Toussaint Louverture: La révolution française et le problème colonial.* Paris : Présence africaine, 1961. P. 314.

colonialism (as both territorial and religious possession)[198] which, in its endless capacity for regeneration—"la croix reparut entière"—resembles a nearly invincible "many-headed hydra"[199]. Furthermore, it would not be very difficult to show that Louverture's once-living tree has here been struck down and carved into the dangerous totem; firmly implanted, rather than planted, the cross like the tree cannot be "déracinée du sol," anymore than it can be legitimately threatened by the futile swings of an impassioned native.

As pessimistic as it may appear, I would argue that the moral of Nau's closing fable is one not of the Louverturian eschatology of eventual success through persistence but of the failures that anticolonialism—figured here as an inability to gauge the true extent of powerlessness on the side of the colonized[200]— inevitably runs up against. By Nau's time, of course, the French had recognized the sovereignty and independence of the Haitian state (1825), but this change in status to (post)colonial nation can hardly diminish the hazards that French colonialism continued to pose to nineteenth century Haiti. After all, does Nau's insistence on the difficulty of ever uprooting ("extirpée") the cross—metonymic marker of territorial possession—not echo Dessalines' awareness, at the very moment when Haitian (post)colonialism was born, that everything still bore the mark of the French?

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[198] For more on the colonial deployment of the phraseology of possession in its overlapping colonial, religious and sexual dimensions, see: Dubreuil, Laurent. "Possessions (post)coloniales." *L'empire du langage.* Paris: Hermann, 2010.

[199] I am borrowing the expression from Linebaugh, Peter and Marcus Rediker. *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic.* Boston: Beacon Press, 2000.

[200] « Ils n'en crurent pas encore leur impuissance ». Nau, p. 316.

Stated in our language of temporality we might say that this legend serves to limit the tension between the colonial experiences of the past and the horizon of expectation for the future, but it does more than that. It serves to predict the impact of any eventual—if only as of yet unrealized, or imagined—future colonization, providing a pessimistic counternarrative, as we have seen, to that of any overly-optimistic parable of heroism based on the ancestors of the revolutionary war. Assuming no novel instances of colonization, however, we might ask what predictive power the legend holds, and finally, what the perlocutionary force of the moral might be? As per the first question, I would note that as a text that binds the anticolonial pasts—both distant and recent—so tightly together, it is not altogether surprising that *L'histoire des Caciques* remains unable to articulate a future that does not contain either the survival of past colonial elements that find their way into the present or the threat of a novel colonization that would reactivate and justify the return of an allegorical framework. As yet another partial allegory for the Haitian Revolution, *L'histoire des Caciques*, like *Stella*, knows that alternative futures may be possible but, wedded to the *Historia Magistra*, at the same time that it finds it lacking, cannot speak of them. Colonization turns out to be a structural precondition to those narratives, including those about the future, which can be told. Ironically, then, I would argue that the perlocutionary effects of the moral, somewhat like Dessalines's call to "effrayer tous ceux qui oseraient tenter de nous la [liberté] ravir encore"[201] ["frighten all those who would dare to attempt to seize [liberty] from us again"] would be to stave off any attempts at future colonization precisely because of the twice-

[201] Proclamation 1804.

encountered, known, long-lasting consequences of colonization once firmly entrenched. In other words, by moving to efface colonization from the possible narratives about the future, *L'histoire des Caciques*, like many nineteenth century Haitian texts, both alarms its readers about the potentiality of renewed colonization, however warranted, as well as, and this was perhaps no more comforting, writes them into an ineffably unspecified, abstract future signed only under the twin concepts of progress and civilization.

As a coda, I should point out that Nau was more clairvoyant than he likely knew; a few short years after the publication of the *Histoire des Caciques d'Haïti*, the country signed the Concordat (1860) that normalized relations with the Vatican and allowed for an influx of foreign priests.[202] Nau's cross, which was never really gone, had regenerated once more.

II: Literature of Amerindian Inspiration

Sepulchers of Words

We are accustomed, perhaps understandably, to thinking of monuments to the dead as immutable objects of shared memory and collective loss. The sheer material—and increasingly public[203]—presence of these silent steles and trumpeting testaments clearly suggests as much. And yet, in his analysis of the work of monuments dedicated to the fallen, "Les monuments aux morts, lieux de fondation de

[202] Dubois, pp. 158-9.

[203] According to Reinhart Koselleck's analysis of the trends towards increased democratization in post-Revolutionary monuments to the dead, monumental architecture can be seen slowly abandoning Church lands in favor of public spaces. Koselleck, Reinhart. *L'expérience de l'histoire.* Paris: Seuil/ Gallimard, 1997. P. 140.

l'identité des survivants," ["Monuments to the dead, places for founding the identity of the survivors"] Reinhart Koselleck argues that far from serving as enduring mementos of tragedy, the monument, more precarious than we realized, ceases to conjoin the commemorators with the commemorated after a *single* generation[204]. Why this occurs, and specifically, why it occurs so suddenly, is, for Koselleck, largely a function of the processes by which monuments come to signify.

Monuments are realizable, Koselleck argues, only after the resolution of several identificatory enigmas. At the level of the dead themselves, the living must assign them a status, be it tragic, as is the case of "martyrs" and "victims," or favorable as in the case of "victors."[205] The living, too, must question themselves as to their identity and their relationship to the dead; they must, in some sense, give an account of their continued existence. In addition, the cause of death of the fallen, what Koselleck calls, "le mourir pour…" and which we shall call, "the reason for dying," must not only be attributed to the dead—*they died defending liberty! They fell defending justice!*—but the survivors as well. It is in this macabre syllogism that the dead and the founders of the monument find identity, with the latter promising to take on the one and same cause which led the former to their graves[206]. This pact—mediated, as we have seen, by assigning the cause of death to the fallen by those in the present—is critically undermined when the generation which founded the monument, too, is consumed by the passage of time. No longer able to affix the political and historical significance of the dead-in-their-death onto the monument, an invisible

[204] Koselleck, pp. 138, 159.
[205] Koselleck, p. 136.
[206] Koselleck, p. 138.

breach appears in the stonework, and, short of mediating institutions that might aide in the transgenerational transfer of the founding pact, the monument loses its affective force[207].

I would like to begin this section on the literary texts of Amerindian inspiration by asking what it might look like to attempt to read them in the mode of Koselleck's monument, that is, as sepulchers of words. After all, many of the texts instantiate, at one point or another, the pact of triple identity; in imaginatively revisiting the life-world of the Amerindians, often to the point of extermination, these works frequently articulate a particular vision the indigenous people of 'Haiti' may have had of their collective death. Furthermore, and as we saw in Nau's tale of Henri, these texts routinely stage the explicit connection between the ideals of the Haitian Revolution and those of their Amerindian 'predecessors.' Far from being a monolithic, flattening-out of literary potential, reading the texts of Amerindian inspiration in this way also allows us to document the specific strategies deployed by certain texts to resist monumentalizing.

Furthermore, I am aware of the potential difficulties of taking texts as monuments. Indeed, much of Koselleck's analysis is devoted to the ways in which political entities utilize their power to inscribe meanings upon these collective emblems, often dedicated to the military power of the state. Textual monuments, however, may, obviously, not necessarily have state-sanctioned aims in quite the same way[208]. I am also cognizant of the fact that in Haiti, with a historically explicable but

[207] Koselleck, p. 159.

[208] It suffices to remember that Vastey's *Le système colonial dévoilé*—which, as we saw, was devoted to the exterminated Amerindians as well as to documenting the murder of countless slaves—was

no-less staggering rate of illiteracy, a textual monument, unlike a more imagistic representation of death, simply cannot uniformly serve the same purposes across the entirety of the population. Nevertheless, caveats aside, I remain convinced that a logic of the monument and its attendant metaphors remains a useful, if imperfect, heuristic for articulating the understanding of history that these texts so often willfully betray. If, as Koselleck argues, monuments can address the question of "the reason for dying" just once in their ephemeral, single-generational lives, than the heterogeneous collection of Amerindian-inspired works that erupted in the late nineteenth-century continuing through the occupation and into the later twentieth-century presented something like a literary institution that would preserve the practice, even as each individual textual monument reassigned the triple coordinates by which the pact of identity could be reactualized.

Examining the characteristics of the texts I surveyed in more detail, now, it is perhaps initially striking, though ultimately not surprising as we shall see, that even accounting for a great deal of diachronic variability, the Amerindian inspired texts overwhelming avoid expression in prose and the format of the novel nearly altogether[209]. I would argue that this at once the result of both internal and external genre pressures working in concert. On the one hand, Nau historical's prose had already provided a critically-acclaimed account of Amerindian life and likely cast a lengthy shadow on any realist fictional attempt at the subject. As *Le Moniteur* stated in

published by the Royal Publisher of King Christophe to show that it is difficult to draw a distinction strictly at this level.

[209] I was able to place only Emile Marcelin's 1931 novel, *La Reine Anacaona*, and the short story, "Le dit de la Fleur d'Or," in Jacques Stéphen Alexis's *Romancero aux Etoiles* under the rubric of prose fiction in my survey of the literature.

its review of *L'histoire des Caciques d'Haïti* in 1854, "La littérature historique est celle qui jusqu'à ce jour a produit en Haïti les œuvres les plus remarquables » ["It is historical literature that has, to our day, produced in Haiti the most remarkable works."] (Nau, 5). On the other hand, thinking back to *Stella* and the narrative demands that Jonassaint places upon early Haitian novels—the "novels in the Haitian tradition"—any fictionalized account of the Amerindian period would, by definition, fall outside of the scope of 'recognizable' Haitian prose.[210] After all, a novel of the Amerindian period may be realist in style but it simply cannot bear witness to the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century socio-economic concerns of the wealthier mulatto or black citizens in Haiti *at the same time.* Finally, as we shall see, a large number of the works draw upon an accepted lexicon of words believed to be of Amerindian origin that often must be translated for the reader via paratextual footnotes or annexed dictionaries, but, as is clear, neither of these strategies duplicate the sense of inclusion or intimacy a Haitian reader, well aware of the particularities of her regional French, would feel upon reading Jonassaint's Haitianized French. 'Amerindianized' French belongs to another. As a result of the exclusionary forces at work within and without the genre, this chapter will be largely devoted to a detailed analysis of two plays which I shall discuss in great length in the section to follow.

A Historical Account

In addition to noting the generic conventions and exclusions under which the Amerindian-inspired literature operated, I would like to provide a brief historical

[210] The reader will recall that for Jonassaint these characteristics include: a realist narrative, a concern for relating the socio-economic problems of the day, and a French inflected with local particularities, that is, a Haitianized French. Jonassaint, p. 60.

overview of the genre. To be clear, this is not because I believe that a reductive historical determinism will explicate the order of time, or the temporal crises, present in these works. After all, if we were to adopt Koselleck's claim that the language of a text is somehow always already out-of-synch, or anachronous, with the larger historical processes to which it may give voice or serve as evidence, than such an uninspired reading would be rendered conceptually mute on arrival[211]. And yet, it is possible to see that there is a certain historical determinism present in the larger field of Haitian literary studies, if not at the level of an interpretative hermeneutic, than at least at the level of the conditions of possibility for such texts. This explains, for example, the commonly circulated narrative that the late 1920s and early 1930s *indigèniste* movement made famous by Jean Price-Mars and others, emerged in the face of the American occupation as the need arose to find new—that is, non-European—sources of cultural capital. Similarly, there are perhaps historically contingent reasons to help explain why Amerindian-inspired texts, despite having previous antecedents[212], gained sway largely in the 1880s and 90s. Once more, I am not saying that any hypothetical reasoning for their emergence as texts accounts for their use of language or what that language might say about the ways in which those texts apprehend the passage of time.

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[211] This idea can be largely summarized by the claim, "Il subsiste toujours un écart entre l'histoire en cours et ses conditions de possibilité langagières ». ["There always remains a gap between history in progress and its linguistic conditions of possibility".] Koselleck, p. 106.

[212] I am thinking here of the poem, "Floranna, la fiancée," written by Haitian Romantic poet, Coriolan Ardouin (1812-1835), in the posthumously published *Poésies.* In this piece the reader is privy to a gathering of Amerindian women who, under the watchful eye of the queen Anacaona, have come together to celebrate the upcoming marriage of Floranna. Ardouin, Coriolan. "Floranna, la fiancée." in *Poésies de Coriolan Ardouin précédées par une notice biographique par B. Ardouin.* Port-au-Prince : Imprimerie de Ritt Ethéart, 1881. pp. 43-5.

I would like to begin my analysis of the Amerindian fictional literature with Arsène Chevry's *Areytos*[213]*: Poésies Indiennes* (1892) for several strategic reasons. On the one hand, to the extent that the text is largely indebted to Nau's *Histoire des Caciques*[214] it allows us the possibility to see the manner and extent to which Haitian literary texts transformed their historical source material. On the other hand, the prefatory note to Chevry's *Areytos* was penned by none other than Henri Chauvet. For those unfamiliar with his work, Chauvet is largely remembered for his Amerindian-inspired play, *La fille du Kacik* (1894), which will be largely critical to our concluding section. As a result, intuiting a sense of how he understood the role of the Amerindian period in the scope of greater Haitian history and even the role that it was to play in the unfolding of history for his contemporaries in the *Areytos* may shed important light on our later understanding of the play. Furthermore, I would argue that Chauvet's preface offers a partial response as to why the idiom of the Amerindians came to be seen as a legitimate expression of the contemporary political and economical concerns of the late nineteenth-century literate classes.

To the extent that commentators have concerned themselves with the ways in which Chauvet's work explicitly organizes Haitian history, they have casually mentioned the tripartite view of national history consisting of, "[un] cycle indien, [un] cycle colonial, [et un] cycle moderne" (vii), that Chauvet offers in the preface to the

[213] "*Areytos* (chants, poèmes, ballades)." ["*Areytos* (songs, poems, ballads)."] Nau, p. 333.

[214] Several of the poems dramatize emphasized or high-profile historical events in Nau's text. The most obvious example of inspiration from Nau is likely the poem, "Legend: XII" which recounts the legend of the indestructible cross with which Nau concluded his text. "La croix, calme en l'espace, invincible, invaincue,/ ouvrait à Quisqueya ses bras ». [« The cross, calm in this space, invincible, unbeaten, / opened her arms to Quisqueya».] Chevry, Arsène. « Légende : XII » in *Areytos : Poésies Indiennes.* Port-au-Prince : Imprimerie de la Jeunesse, 1892. pp. 51-3.

Areytos[215]. Looking back at the whole of Chauvet's uneven literary production in light of this understanding of history, the literary historian, Ghislain Gouraige argued that if any of the three historical "cycles" were underrepresented, it was only because Chauvet's project remained incomplete. "*Faute d'être achevé*, le théâtre de Chauvet se présente telle une œuvre morcelée. Dans la conception du poète *elle devait être un vaste tableau d'ensemble* » ["*Unfinished as it was*, Chauvet's theatrical works appear as a broken up *œuvre*. According to the designs of the poet, *it was to be a vast, unified tableau*"] (Gouraige, 97, my emphasis). In reading the preface to the *Areytos*, however, I would argue that it was not a generic, even incompleteness and uniform lack (of time, of energy) that led Chauvet to prefer certain historical periods in favor of others—as if given time, given energy, he would produce works on the other periods *as easily*—but that one "cycle" in particular had come to be so metahistorically mute, so emotionally contested that it proved discursively difficult in a way the others were not.

« Quelle ample mission ! », proselytizes Chauvet in the preface, « riche et abondante, plein de sève comme notre luxuriante, s'offre à nos jeunes laboureurs de la pensée. Chaque page, chaque ligne de nos chroniques locales, de 1492 à la date de la proclamation de notre indépendance, recèle les sujets les plus divers » ["What a grandiose mission ! Rich and abundant, full of lifeblood like our lush surroundings,

[215] "L'originalité d'Henri Chauvet est d'avoir créé à l'avance un cadre rigide pour son œuvre patriotique. […] Poèmes et drames portent le titre générique « Les Quisquéyennes » et sont conçus pour former trois parties : *le cycle indien, le cycle colonial, et le cycle moderne ».* ["The originality of Henri Chauvet's work is to have created, ahead of time, a rigid framework, for his patriotic *oeuvre*. […] Plays and poems bear the generic title of « The Quisquéyennes » and are conceived of as belonging to three parts: the Indian cycle, the Colonial cycle, and the Modern cycle."] Gouraige, Ghislain. *Histoire de la littérature haïtienne.* Port-au-Prince : Imprimerie N.A. Théodore, 1960. p. 95.

offers itself to the young laborers of thought. Each page, each line of our local chronicles, from 1492 to the date of the proclamation of our independence, contains within it the most diverse subjects"] (vi). On the one hand, we could simply contextualize these remarks by pointing out that Chauvet was writing a preface for Chevry's collection of Amerindian inspired poetry and that an emphasis on the Amerindian period was warranted. That alone, however, cannot explain why the only historical inspiration for the great (but young) minds of Chevry's generation would be the historical period (1492-1804)—"*de 1492 à la date de la proclamation de notre indépendance*"—notably excising the admittedly turbulent, post-Independence period, Chauvet's "modern cycle". Furthermore, I would argue that the gesture is doubled in specifically targeting the generation coming of age in the 1890s. After all, much of the history of nineteenth century Haiti would be unknown to them in any concrete, embodied or phenomenological sense; when combined with Chauvet's unstated desire for them to avoid the annals of recent history, the result is a serious interrogation of the epistemological and moral utility of their national, postcolonial history

Speaking, as many nineteenth century writers did, in the idiom of Haiti's public performance upon the world stage, Chauvet goes onto offer a glimpse of why it was that he so apprehended the Haitian nineteenth century. "Depuis un demi-siècle *on assiste à un spectacle navrant* d'une telle *démoralisation sociale* que l'on sent […] comme *sombrer sa foi en l'avenir d'Haïti*. […] Au point qu'on est tenté, *loin d'applaudir*, d'incriminer le téméraire qui oserait, dans une œuvre nationale, rappeler l'horreur de ces sombres souvenirs » ["For the last half-century we have been attending a distressing performance of such *socially demoralizing magnitude* that one

feels […] as if *one's faith in the future of Haiti were plummeting*. […] To the point where one is tempted, *far from clapping*, to incriminate the audacious fool who would dare, in a national work, to remind us of the horror of these somber memories"] (v-vi). The historical caesura, then, appears to be, in part, Chauvet's attempt to preserve a sense of the optimism and the open-future that the proclamation of Independence may have once offered, for its youngest generation of intellectuals. And yet, the return to the Colonial histories—whether Spanish or French, "Indien" or "Colonial"—must be read as more than a willed rejection of the nefarious effects of a demoralizing "modern cycle." With the centennial of Haitian independence on the visible horizon [1904], it is hard not to notice, especially as Chauvet reaches for his conclusion, that he writes with a sense of unspecified, though anticolonial urgency that renders the revisiting of the Amerindian and Revolutionary histories, in some senses, quite comprehensible. Confident that the soil of Haiti will emerge victorious, possessing, as it does, "une jeunesse ardente à le chérir, à le faire valoir, et à le glorifier ; — à le défendre » (xi), the identity of the forces against which the Haitian youth, severed from their recent past, must mobilize remains occluded. For Chauvet, it is only in citing the nation's antislavery qua anticolonial history[216]—and its concomitant moral and experiential instruction—that the youth will fend off the anonymous colonial powers of the nineteenth century. "Ils montreront combien la Patrie a souffert de *la servitude du siècle dernier*, et combien il serait dur, ignominieux de la laisser *re*tomber sous la dépendance d'un *nouveau maître* » (xi, my emphasis). Both the content and

[216] This overlap, well documented by Fischer, accounts, in my mind, for Chauvet's use of the metaphors of slavery ("le nouveau maître") when referring to the possible loss of territorial sovereignty.

placement of this word of warning, suggest, I would argue, that there were historically contingent reasons that made the resurrection of Amerindian inspired themes, at least partially, an appropriate vehicle for the circulation of responses to late nineteenth-century apprehensions of neo-colonialist designs on Haitian sovereignty[217].

Two caveats are in order before I proceed. One, as in other critical reading practices, a certain amount of care is required in sifting through the cultural material of Amerindian inspiration in order to avoid unnuanced readings that reduce variation across source material for the sake of rhetorical economy. Take, as but one example of many, the work of Michael Largey, who has convincingly argued in his *Vodou Nation: Haitian Music, Art, and Cultural Nationalism* (2006), that the musical pieces produced by the transplanted, Haitian-born composer, Justin Elie (1883-1931), largely embraced the Amerindian past as an attempt to disavow any African inheritance upon Haitian culture so as to conform to the tastes and expectations of his American audiences[218]. In other words, the Amerindianization of Elie's scores cannot be thought through without accounting for the ways in which not only temporal and geographic but national considerations—think back to Nau's preface—helped to shape the reception of his work. Haitian Amerindian inspired texts produced for Americans clearly operate differently and cannot be so quickly assimilated into the works that

[217] As a discussion of the specific historical causes that might have been motivating this sentiment exceeds the scope and domain of this argument, I will provide only two brief conjectures. One the one hand, I suspect that part of the apprehension lay in increasing economic encroachment by the French and other foreign bodies. Specifically, the 1880 creation of the French-owned, Banque Nationale d'Haïti which performed all of the functions of a national treasury at cost to the Haitian state (Dubois, 175). I also suspect the increased military and territorial presence of the United States in the Caribbean sea, including the disputed annexation of the previously Haitian territory of Navassa island, cannot have been perceived as anything but inauspicious (Dubois, 177).

[78] Largey, Michael D. *Vodou Nation: Haitian Art, Music and Cultural Nationalism.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006. p. 140.

form the basis of this chapter's reflections. Conversely, even limiting our scope to late nineteenth century Haitian literature, the sense of urgency I noted, was addressed by others without resorting to lessons gleaned from the distant pasts of glorified anticolonial resistance. In fact, we need only open to the poem, "L'éveil," in Massillon Coicou's *Poésies nationales* (1892)—that is, published in the same year as Chevry's *Areytos*—to see the evocation of a similar sense of unspecified, general alarm being discussed not with an eye to the past, but with feet firmly planted in Chauvet's "cycle moderne" and with an eye on the future. "Tel le nautonier quand la mer se déchaîne,/je monte à la vigie et préviens le danger./ […]/ Or, pas de protecteur, d'où qu'il vienne : merci !/ Faisons-nous de nous seuls ! Crois, lutte, aime, travaille/ Ô mon peuple, et demain nous aurons réussi ! » [Like the steersman when the sea grows violently agitated / I climb the look-out and warn of the danger. / […] / However, no protector, from wherever he may come: thank you! / We shall take care of ourselves! Have faith, struggle, love, work./ Oh my people, and tomorrow we will have succeeded!"] (Coicou, 230-1).[219] That this danger could be addressed from the « present » of the nineteenth century does not mean, however, that Coicou's strategy was oft-duplicated; resistance to what Chauvet called the modern period of Haitian history—specifically in those texts where one would expect the articulation of an application of the past upon the present, if our readings of Nau and Bergeaud are any indication—remained widespread.

[219] Coicou, Massillon. *Poésies nationales.* Port-au-Prince : Panorama. Paris : Présence Africaine, 1963. pp. 230-1.

III: Two views on Monumental fiction: La fille du Kacik (1894) *and* Anacaona (1927)

I would like to conclude this chapter with a reading of two plays of Amerindian inspiration. The first, *La fille du Kacik,* written in 1894 by Henri Chauvet and set in 1493, focuses on the anticolonial efforts of the warrior chieftain, 'Kaonabo', against the island's earliest European inhabitants. The second, *Anacaona: poème dramatique en vers et en trois actes et un tableau* (1927) was authored by the playwright pair, Frédéric Burr-Reynaud and Dominique Hippolyte; set one decade after the events of *La fille du Kacik*, as resistance to the Spanish seems increasingly futile [1503], the play recounts the massacre of Amerindians in the Xaragua province and the murder of Kaonabo's widow, the lyrical Cacique Anacaona. This choice of dramatic material, as one might suspect, is motivated, however, by more than a desire to serve as yet one more conduit for the already canonized figures that the royal couple have become in Haitian letters. Like the contrasting and yet complementary natures of Caonabo and Anacaona themselves, these texts adapt two vastly different strategies for staging—and mourning—the death of the Amerindians, sculpting a literary monument that appears as circumvented in Chauvet as it appears grave in *Anacaona*. Furthermore, and relatedly as will become clear, these divergent strategies depend themselves not only upon a certain understanding of the way in which the pre-discursive categories of historical time are apprehended in each text, but also upon a certain willed manipulation of calendar time which will either serve to defer or dramatize the will to monumentalization. Lastly, since monumentalization, as a triple-pact, requires 'the survivor' to reflect upon the nature of his survival and his own temporally-embodied identity in the present, these two texts—one written on the eve of the centennial of Haitian Independence in the jaws of an anonymous but perceived colonial encroachment, and the other, performed for the first time twelve years after

the sacrilegious boots of the U.S. Marines had first stamped out Haitian Independence—allow us to think through the relationship that each saw between their vastly different generations[220] and their exterminated Amerindian predecessors under colonization.

La fille du Kacik: Historical Erasure and Fictional Loss

« La scène se passe en 1493, après le premier départ de Colomb d'Haïti pour l'Espagne. »[221]

["The play takes place in 1493, after Columbus' first departure from Haiti for Spain."]

To the casual reader the statement of the year may simply serve as a contextualizing gesture. Placed as it is, following the description of characters, but prior to the play's rather remarkable preface, this seemingly transparent and unaccentuated paratextual remark may be, and likely was, taken as a required conceit of the genre. Yet, as I will come to show, the year that Chauvet chose to highlight within the greater Amerindian period of Haitian history—much like the temporal prejudice he displayed in the preface to Chevry's work—has far-reaching effects for the kind of history that *La fille du Kacik* can literally stage. After all, a large portion of the play is devoted to debates on the kind of military or diplomatic reaction that the League of Amerindian Caciques [chieftains] should offer in response to the initial territorial encroachment of the Spaniards, their alliance with the traitorous Cacique Guacanagarik, and the establishment of the very first Spanish Fort upon Amerindian lands. Furthermore, the play's careful historical cropping allows for the enactment of a moment—however brief—when armed anticolonial resistance to the Spanish seemed

[220] Chauvet's preface to Chevry largely allows us, I believe, to adopt the use of the concept of generations.

[221] Chauvet, Henri. *La fille du Kacik*. Port-au-Prince : Editions Fardin, 1976. Reproduction of *La fille du Kacik.* Paris : Vve Victor Goupy, 1894. p. 6.

possible and thus inverts overly-comfortable discourses on the unequal distribution of power within Amerindian and European relations.

None of which is to say, however, that Chauvet appears bounded by the historical narrative resources to which he would have access; several key characters are, after all, products of Chauvet's dramatic imagination. As we shall see, the relationship between history and fiction, as in *Stella*, is rather more complicated here. Furthermore, thinking back to Nau, whose *Histoire des Caciques* extended into the period where the importation of the first African slaves overlapped with that of the death of the last ruling Cacique, it was possible, as I have shown, to create a fictional, if ambiguous, kinship that justified the incorporation of Amerindian history into Haitian national history. However, as a result of the careful calibration of Chauvet's periodization, the nature of the special relationship between the Amerindian and African populations of 'Haiti,' as well as the role that Amerindian history would play in Haitian affairs would have to be interrogated anew. Since the play's preface explicitly addresses many of our concerns, I turn now to a brief overview of this paratextual segment.

Prefatory Remarks

There is no mistaking, from the defensive gestures of the opening lines, that the reader of the preface approaches a text in conversation with a series of muted accusations. "Le naturaliste fait l'appel des espèces disparus et les classe. L'accuse-t-on de vouloir fermer la voie du progrès à la science, en la faisant reculer vers un passé qui n'est plus que débris et qui s'est mêlé à la poussière des siècles » ["The naturalist

creates a roster of lost species and sorts them. Do we accuse him of wanting to close off the path of progress for science, in making it take a step backwards towards a past that is no longer anything but debris and which has become intermingled with the dust of the centuries"] (Chauvet, 7) ? The accusation thus appears to have been two-fold. On the one hand, the rebuke appears epistemological: *why is it, Chauvet, that you have turned your attention to an object of study so temporally removed*; *what value is there in it?* On the other hand, the reproach is clearly axiological as well: *is not a concern with the distant past, in this age, an impediment to the imperative of ever-advancing progress?* As we have seen, the anonymous author of the preface turns to the naturalist to suggest that a concern with the past—even one that is forever lost, "des espèces disparus"—contributes towards the epistemic foundation of futural "progress." Continuing in Chauvet's defense, he writes :

> *La conquête de l'avenir est la préoccupation du présent*. L'homme veut raccourcir l'espace pour aller plus vite. Obsédé par cette pensée, il creuse des mines pour en extraire la houille et le fer, il perce des tunnels pour abaisser les frontières. Alors de ces puits, de ces tunnels, sortent des forêts ensevelies et des cadavres momifiés depuis des millions d'années. Ici le géologue reçoit le commandement impérieux de s'arrêter pour bien examiner la nature du terrain et la disposition des couches superposées. L'ingénieur se sert des études de cet observateur et entreprend les travaux indispensables. *C'est ainsi que la connaissance du passé est la condition de toute marche assurée vers l'avenir.*[222]
>
> [*The conquest of the future is the concern of the present*. Man seeks to shorten distances in order to go faster. Overcome with this thought, he digs mines in order to extract coal and iron from them; he excavates tunnels to bring down borders. And so, from these wells, from these tunnels, emerge forests that have been buried and cadavers that have been mummified for millions of years. Here the geologist receives the pressing order to stop and thoroughly examine the nature of the terrain and the disposition of the superimposed layers. The engineer draws from the studies of this observer and sets upon his vital task. *It is in this way that the knowledge of the past is the condition of each secure step taken towards the future*.]

The articulation between the anthropological categories of time is not, perhaps, as evident as it initially appeared. If the conquest of the future—the metaphor is

[222] Chauvet, p. 7. My emphasis.

important here[223]—is the sole preoccupation of the present, then what would ever justify the backwards glance towards the past? Indeed, the past and its concomitant material remnants—those petrified forests and mummified corpses—emerge only as a seeming consequence of the forward burrowing motion towards the future. In each case it as if the accelerated[224] drive toward the future becomes frustrated in its realization by the exhumed testaments of the past; it is only after this cumbersome past has been disciplined—through the sketch of the naturalist, the strata analysis of the geologist—that it can be put to the service of the future and finds its justification. Chauvet, then, must similarly emerge as a technician whose science, like that of the geologist, can transform the 'Amerindian past,' from 'raw, found object,' that simply refers back to a past, into the foundation for societal or personal advancement into the future. Citing the famed, French naturalist, the preface writer confirms our suspicions soon thereafter: "Les chantres du passé sont *des Cuvier en leur genre*, ils secouent le linceul des peuples gisant avec leurs mœurs sous les ruines de leurs époques » ["The bards of the past are *Cuviers of their kind*, shaking the shrouds of lifeless peoples and their customs out from under the ruins of their epochs"] (Chauvet, 8, my emphasis). To avoid a sense of gratuitousness, however, in this framework a study of the past

[223] A language of the conquest of time was also used by Nau who, in likening himself to Columbus, activated a related set of lexical terms. "Ce que j'ai fait, j'y reviens en finissant, ce que nous avons fait, si mes collaborateurs veulent bien me permettre de parler en leur nom, est un travail d'explorateur. La matière que nous avons traitée est riche et neuve ». ["What I have done—now, as I finish, I return to this idea—what we have done, if my collaborators will allow me to speak in their name, is the work of an explorer. The subject on which we have spoken is rich and new."] Importantly, however, Nau's conquest and exploration of the past has been inverted; for Chauvet the future is now the site of the conquest. Nau, p. 16.

[224] This is an essential constitutive feature of Koselleck's *Neuzeit*. "We have already found a feature to distinguish so-called modernity (*Neuzeit*): *acceleration."* Koselleck, Reinhart. Trans. Todd Samuel Presner et al. *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing History, Spacing Concepts.* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002. p.165.

cannot be undertaken on its own terms: it derives its utility only in being oriented towards the future. This detail is not lost on the author. "M. Henri Chauvet se plait à se promener dans la plaine de la Vega et sur les hauteurs du Cibao qui retentissent encore des areytos des Sambas. *A nous qui préparons la célébration du centenaire de notre indépendance, il vient dire* » ["Mr. Henri Chavet enjoys walking in the Vega Plain and among the heights of the Cibao which still resound with the areytos of the Sambas. And it is for us, who are preparing to celebrate the centennial of our independence, that he has come to say"] (Chauvet, 8, my emphasis).

Beyond explicit theorizations of historical time, the author of the preface also seemed drawn into questions surrounding the demonstrable historical 'accuracy'—or inaccuracies, as the case may be—of Chauvet's characters and their actions. The presence of one name in the dramatis personae, in particular, would likely stand out to many readers literate in early Atlantic history: Mamona, daughter of the Cacique Kaonabo[225]. These readers would know, for example, that the historical record often identifies a 'Higuenamota' as the daughter of the bellicose Amerindian chieftain. So what, then, accounts for the sudden emergence of the fictive Mamona and the erasure of the historically extent Higuenamota? "Par une heureuse fiction l'auteur lui donne une fille, qui n'est pas Higuenamota, mais la brune Mamona. […] Cette fiction, d'ailleurs, révèle tout un côté de l'existence de Caonabo » ["In a fortunate fictional gesture, the author has given him a daughter, which is not Higuenamota, but the dark-haired Mamona. […] Moreover, this fiction reveals another side to the existence of Caonabo"] (Chauvet, 14-5). To be clear, Mamona is narratologically useful to

[225] I have chosen to retain Chauvet's orthography ("Kaonabo") to distinguish the character of *La Fille du Kacik* from the historical agent ("Caonabo").

Chauvet ; after all, it is her romantic interest in Rodrigo, the Spanish conquistador who saves her from a Crocodile attack, that continually serves to moderate her father's otherwise unrelenting will to avenge the abuses of their uninvited Spanish guests. And while Rodrigo's own personal narrative, torn as he is between the love of the Amerindian princess, and his duty to fight alongside his fellow Spaniards may well hearken to Corneille, the author of the preface suggests, as we have seen, that the entire dramatic problematic around Mamona is largely an attempt to depict a more nuanced and complex Caonabo, a man as ferocious to his enemies as he is gentle to his daughter. "Contraste de sensations fécond en effets dramatiques » ["A contrast of sensations which bears dramatic fruit"] (Chauvet,15).

Beyond the addition of the fictional Mamona, however, we also need to account for the unexpected erasure of the Amerindian queen, the historically extent Anacaona, wife of Caonabo and potential mother to the fictive Mamona. As the dramatis personae makes sufficiently clear Anacaona never once appears on stage; in fact, her name is only invoked once—without a single marker of filiation—by Mamona when describing the moment of reverie in which she was nearly mortally surprised by a crocodile[226]. It is worth asking, briefly, what it is about Anacaona that makes her so incompatible with the tale that Chauvet sought to tell that she had to be excised, as the title suggests (*La fille du Kacik*), from the triad of family drama. Why,

[226] Mamona : "Sans craindre aucun péril, / je sommeillais heureuse, aspirant le délice,/ du parfum des lotus, livrant à son caprice, / mon esprit vagabond : je rêvais aux splendeurs / dont Anacaona m'avait fait les honneurs ; / je revoyais sa cour et les fêtes royales / que la reine samba conserve en ses annales, / en ses doux areytos…Soudain un bruit affreux ». ["Mamona: Without the slightest apprehension, / I happily napped, taking in the delightful/ smell of the lotus flowers giving over to their whims / my wandering mind: I dreamt of the splendors / by which Anacaona had honored me; / once more I saw her court and the royal feasts/ that the queen bard safeguards in her annals,/ in her sweet areytos…Suddenly, a horrible sound"] Chauvet, p. 58.

in other words, cast her aside when the author of the preface not only acknowledged Anacaona's historical existence but simultaneously insisted that Chauvet had remained close to the historical truth[227]? I would argue here, as elsewhere, that the glaring absence and spectral presence of Anacaona is part of a larger attempt on the part of Chauvet to short-circuit the possibility that his text could be read in the mode of monumental fiction. After all, Anacaona is largely remembered—in both historical and fictional literature—for the tragic fate she suffered under the Spanish colonial governor Nicolás de Ovando. By constructing a narrative with a carefully calibrated historical scope, removing Anacaona, and largely killing only Spanish characters, with the notable exception of the fictive Mamona, the play prevents the allegorization that would make of the *romantic* tragedy of Mamona and Rodrigo's forbidden love a *national* tragedy in the mode of Sommer's "foundational fictions." In fact, to the extent that Mamona's love shields the honor-bound Spaniard from the full extent of Amerindian retaliation, she must die; romantic tragedy is, here, the direct consequence of avoiding the national tragedy of occupation under a foreign power. In time, we shall return to the scene of Rodrigo's death to see how the logic of the monumental is so powerfully foreclosed. For now, however, let us leave the prefatory comments and watch as the curtain rises.

The Dessalinian Inheritance of Koanabo's Areyto: "Aya bombé"

[227] "Le poète, en exhumant dans une action dramatique toute une époque disparue, devait rester dans la vérité historique. S'il s'en en écarté, c'est dans la peinture du caractère chevaleresque de Rodrigo ». ["In exhuming an entire lost epoch into his dramatic work, the poet had to remain within the realm of historical truth. If he has distanced himself from it, it is only in the portrait of the chivalrous character of Rodrigo."] Chauvet, p. 17.

In direct opposition to other literary historians such as Robert Cornevin, whose *Théâtre haïtien: Des origines à nos jours* (1973) includes the dramatic work of playwrights in colonial Saint-Domingue as a necessary supplement to a national literary history, Jean Jonassaint has argued that because of the features later texts will inherit from Dessalines' infamous oration, that the Proclamation of Independence should be read as the *foundational* text of Haitian literature[228]. I am hesitant to state that all Haitian literature partakes in the features that Jonassaint sees in the Proclamation and thus that in addition to being the father of the nation he should also father its entire body of literature. I will, however, claim that Chauvet's *La fille du Kacik*, more than explicitly inheriting (in the Deriddean sense of both accepting and renewing) the phraseology of Dessalinian anticolonial discourse, stages not only the very moment in the Amerindian past to which Dessalines alluded in his call for a postcolonial mimetic praxis ("imitons") but *also* the fully-aware gaze from the past looking forward to the moment when it would serve as a model.

"Marchons sur d'autres traces: imitons ces peuples qui, portant leur sollicitudes jusques sur l'avenir, et appréhendant de laisser à la postérité l'exemple de la lâcheté, ont préféré être exterminés que rayés du nombre des peuples libres. »[229]

["Let us pursue other tracks: let us imitate those people who, bearing their concerns unto the future, and fearing to leave to posterity and example of their cowardice, preferred to be exterminated rather than stricken from among the free peoples of the world."]

Said another way, the play stages both the explicit repetition of Dessalinian discourse (in the nineteenth century object we hold) and is simultaneously intended to act as the initial set of speech-acts which inspired Dessalinian imitation in the first

[228] Jonassaint, Jean. « Towards New Paradigms in Caribbean Studies : The Impact of the Haitian Revolution on Our Literatures." In *Tree of Liberty: Cultural Legacies of the Haitian Revolution in the Atlantic World.* Ed. Doris L. Garraway. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2008. P. 201.
[229] *Proclamation à la nation.* 1804.

place. This repetition will have a profound impact not only upon the anticolonial framework that Kaonabo mobilizes against the Spanish, but also on the Haitian historical figure or figures that we are openly invited to read as his historical inheritor. Let us follow, then, the Dessalinian trace in Kaonabo's positions.

As I remarked earlier, the Proclamation of Haitian Independence perceived the project of decolonization as both unfinished (*the French imprint on Haitian society lingered*) and precarious (*the French could still return)*. This largely serves to explain why it was the solemn oath to die opposing French neocolonial impulses rather than live under French rule with which Dessalines sought, in part, to unite the national community. "Jurons […] de mourir plutôt que de vivre sous sa domination ; de combattre jusqu'au dernier soupir pour l'Indépendance de notre pays » ["Let us take an oath […] to die rather than to live under its domination ; to fight to the last breath for the Independence of our nation"] [230]. Given the state of alarm it may also explain the frequency of the idiom in the brief text.

If the complex temporal logic of *La Fille du Kacik* is to be believed, however, Dessalines may have been repeating a fifteenth century Amerindian military slogan. During the seventh scene of the second act, we witness Kaonabo before a gathering of the caciques of the other territories. They had gathered to determine what they should do, collectively, about both the sudden and rapacious territorial intrusions of the Spanish and the treacherous, Guacanagarak, the Amerindian chieftain who allied himself with Columbus and granted him the land he needed for his fort. Word has just arrived that Spanish prisoners are being brought into his dominion and Kaonabo,

[230] *Proclamation à la nation*. 1804.

ecstatic, calls for vengeance and a familiar sounding vow : "Jurons de mourir tous plutôt que l'étranger / vienne en notre pays sous ses lois nous ranger !...» ["Let us take an oath to die, every one of us, rather than allow the foreigner/ to come into our country and under his laws be placed!"][231] The anticolonial rhetoric, much like Dessalines's, creates two distinct communities. The imagined but threatened Amerindian unity—those interpellated to be signatories of Kaonabo's oath, "jurons"— which has a legitimate claim to the territory ("notre pays"), is clearly opposed to the anonymous collective singular, "l'étranger," who seeks to stamp out local sovereignty in the reproduction of its own legal framework.

However, if Kaonabo is indeed channeling Dessalines, who is, in turn, imitating Caonabo, we might rightly be expecting a stronger anticolonial rhetoric, one which identifies the Spanish not only with the loss of territorial or juridical sovereignty, but frames their struggle in terms of personal liberty. After all, for Dessalines, to be free of the French was to be free, tout court. We should thus not be surprised to find that Kaonabo's rhetoric frames the arrival of the Spaniards in terms of the threat of an eventual enslavement. "Peuple jamais esclave / Nous devons conserver la fière liberté / dont nous tous des aïeux nous avons hérité ! …/ Or les banaclès [étrangers], abordant le rivage / du verdoyant Bohio [Haiti], veulent de l'esclavage / nous apporter la honte et les ignobles fers » ["People whom slavery has never known / We must preserve the proud liberty / which we have all inherited from our ancestors !.../ However, the banaclès [foreigners], reaching the shore / of verdant

[231] Chauvet, p. 69.

Bohio [Haiti], seek, from slavery/ to bring us the shame and ignoble chains"][232]. In Kaonabo's stirring tone, personal liberty becomes both a passive and an active inheritance. It is passive in the sense that the freedom from bondage was passed onto his contemporaries, in an unbroken chain projecting into the past, by their Amerindian ancestors ("people jamais esclave"). Yet, Kaonabo also suggests that this is a combat that each epoch must wage anew. Finding a place for the Spaniards within the Amerindian term of "banaclès," or "men from the sea," Kaonabo may be placing the newly-arrived Europeans within a genealogy of potential Caribbean enemies to their personal sovereignty. Perhaps. And yet, the ways in which Kaonabo speaks of slavery and, in particular, the metonymy he immediately establishes between enslavement and the chains of bondage ("les ignobles fers"), speaks to a later, and particularly transatlantic understanding of the institution, of which the historical Caonabo would have been entirely ignorant. The proof, of course, lies in the fact that Caonabo was captured by the Spanish after being made to believe that the irons placed around his hands were adornments worn by European royalty[233]. He only later realized the extent of the error he had committed. *Ignobles fers*, indeed[234]. Again, my

[232] Chauvet, p. 64-5.

[233] "Interrogé par le cacique Indien [Caonabo] sur l'usage de ces ornements, il [the Spanish governor, Ojéda] lui dit que les rois en Europe s'en revêtaient dans les grandes solennités pour paraître devant leurs sujets. Il lui proposa de l'en orner. Caonabo ne fit aucune difficulté d'y consentir ; il parut même joyeux de se voir tout couvert de ces fers qui reluisaient aux rayons d'un soleil éclatant ».
["When asked by the Indian cacique [Caonabo] about the use of these ornaments, he [the Spanish governor, Ojéda] told him that the kings of Europe adorned themselves in them during great celebrations in order to appear before their subjects. He offered to adorn him in them. Caonabo had no difficulty in agreeing; he even appeared joyful to see himself covered in these chains which reflected the rays of a brilliant sun."] Nau, p. 130.

[234] Given the historical period to which Chauvet has limited his text (1493) we cannot expect the scene in which Caonabo is captured (1494) to appear in his text. What is rather curious, however, is the mastery which Chauvet's Kaonabo acquires over the technology of chains. See in particular the scenes related to Rodrigo's capture. *Act III; Scenes 2, 3.* Chauvet, p. 78.

intent here is not to deride Chauvet for the historical inaccuracies in his text, but to use this moment to demonstrate, rather definitively, that Kaonabo, in mobilizing a discursive strategy that conjoins the struggles of anticolonialism with an antislavery incompatible with the late fifteenth century, is clearly inheriting and awkwardly translating a Dessalinian postcolonial discourse.

A similar—and quite literal—translation is visible in the final scene of the fourth act, where Kaonabo seeks to acquire the military support of his fellow Caciques in order to wage a military campaign on the few remaining Spaniards that Columbus has left behind. This scene represents a rather unique divergence from the rest of the play in that is presented to the spectator in the mode of the Amerindian cultural form of the *areyto* (song, poem, chant) vocalized by Kaonabo. The five verse *areyto* ranges from an autobiographical account of how the cannibalistic Carib chieftain, born in Guadeloupe, rose to prominence in 'Haitian' society to an increasingly urgent call to radical antislavery. This insistence and thematic unity across the areyto is further underscored by the identical lines with which Kaonabo ends each verse: "Pour bien combattre et chasser l'esclavage!... / Aya, aya bombé" ["In order to better fight off and chase away slavery!.../ Aya, aya bombé"] (113). Anticipating that his reader was likely to be unfamiliar with the Amerindian expression, "Aya, aya bombé," Chauvet provides, somewhat hesitantly, the following translation in a footnote: "Mots indiens qui signifieraient : 'Mourons, mourons libres…'" ["Indian words which *are said to mean*: "Let us die, let us die, free…"] (113).

Based on the lexical and ethnological details which appear in Kaonabo's areyto it is safe to assume that Chauvet's text was a direct inheritor of Nau's; Chauvet's

uncertainty surrounding the words, "Aya, aya bombé," expressed in French's conditional—utilized to express unconfirmed hearsay—further supports this claim. In the appendix to his *Histoire*, Nau expressed a great deal of reservation concerning the supposed Amerindian origins of the expression. According to Nau, the expression was 'discovered' one day by the members of King Henri Christophe's intellectual circle whom he had charged with the task of researching the life of the legendary anticolonial Cacique, his homonym: Henri. 'Aya bombé', they told the monarch, was the only surviving fragment of an ancient warrior song that, like much of the Amerindian oral literature, had been lost to transmission. Though Nau does indeed provide a supposed translation of the chorus ("Mourir plutôt que d'être asservis!") ["Death rather than enslavement"], in denying the existence of the oral literature that was supposedly excavated by Christophe's literati, he suggests not only that Christophe was the subject of an elaborate historical hoax, but relatedly that the expression is pure fabrication.[235] "Malheureusement, ces prétendues traditions orales n'existent pas" ["Unfortunately, these so-called oral traditions do not exist"] (Nau, 329). Nau was partially wrong, however, for there is no refuting that there was indeed an oral military tradition that *did* exist in Haiti and which espoused the principles captured in the admittedly memorable syllables, "Aya bombé," only it wasn't of Amerindian invention, it was Dessalinian. What is 'Aya bombé,' I would argue, if not the desire to establish an indigenous, pre-colonial genealogy for Dessalines's apprehensions of French colonial recidivism? There is simply no other way of accounting for the correspondence between later translations of the frequently

[235] Nau's exploration of the history of the term, "Aya bombé" can be found in his appendix, "De la langue et littérature des aborigènes d'Haïti." Nau, p. 329.

invoked, supposedly Amerindian, expression[236] and Dessalines's claim in the 1804 Proclamation: "Jurons […] de mourir plutôt que vivre sous sa domination." ["Let us take an oath […] to die rather than to live under domination."]

The Amerindian literature, then, peering where Nau acknowledged that history could not, was intended to stage those crucial moments which Haitian history was later called upon to imitate, those traces Haitians were intended to follow, not in the mode of the postcolonial, but in its imagined pre-Colombian antecedent. In this way, Chauvet's text is exemplary of the kind of temporal paradox which is usually more frequently encountered in science-fiction novels of time travel. It is almost as if Dessalines is simultaneously both the inspiration for Amerindian anticolonial discourse—it is largely impossible to articulate without the Proclamation—and the inheritor of anticolonial struggle that must be imitated and reactivated anew. Furthermore, and to borrow from the thinking of Michael Largey on Amerindian inspired music, the literature substituted a largely fictive, but authoritative, "classical" genealogy—"ces prétendues traditions orales n'existent pas"!—in order to elude the more troubling questions of race which any discussion of genealogies into the distant past must encounter[237]. In this one must remember that it was the nineteenth century mulattos who, more than their black counterparts, benefitted from the 'fortuitous' (that is, constructed) overlap between the label that was used to describe their skin color in

[236] What is rather remarkable in the Amerindian inspired literature that I surveyed is the startling conceptual fixity of the expression despite a span of nearly two hundred years. See in particular: Chevry, Arsène. "Guerrier." *Areytos: Poésies indiennes*. Port-au-Prince: Imprimerie de la Jeunesse, 1892. pp. 23-5. Burr-Reynaud, Frédéric and Dominique Hippolyte. *Anacaona : poème dramatique en vers, en trois actes et un tableau.* Port-au-Prince : Imprimerie, 1941. Alexis, J.S. « Dit de la Fleur d'Or ». *Romancero aux Etoiles.* Paris : Gallimard, 1960. pp. 153-180. Métallus, Jean. *Anacaona.* Paris : Haiter, 1986. pp. 114-5.

[237] Largey, p. 127.

Haiti's colorist taxonomy—"jaune"—and the term that was used to describe the skin color of the Amerindians in this literature (also "jaune"). Implicitly then, it was mulattos who could lay a legitimate claim to this "classical" ancestry[238]. To return to our point, the scholars Christophe commissioned set off to find anticolonial inspiration in the Amerindian traditions of the last Cacique, Henri, but, as I suggest, they needn't have (and likely didn't) look further than Haiti's first head of state.

Nowhere is this complex temporality more evident than in the concluding moments of *La Fille du Kacik*. As we gaze upon the stage one last time, Kaonabo is overcome with two competing emotions. On the one hand Kaonabo is briefly wrought with grief at the death of his daughter, Mamona, who has just committed suicide upon learning of the fatal injuries her Spanish husband, Rodrigo, suffered in the armed conflict between their peoples. However, as Cacique, Kaonabo's personal loss, and any visible manifestations of the work of mourning, are entirely redirected into a call for vengeance that projects not only across the space of the entire island, but, importantly, across time and into the future.

> KAONABO : "Partout où paraîtra l'étranger au Bohio, / je lui ferai la guerre, une guerre mortelle ! / Aux miens j'insufflerai *cette haine éternelle* / qui déborde en mon cœur.
> *(Puis, comme illuminé).* Oui, *la postérité* / exaucera mon vœu. Au nom de liberté / Ils se lèveront tous, si de votre esclavage / ils subissent un jour les chaînes et l'outrage ; / *Alors « lugubrera »* dans tous nos mornes verts / le cri d'indépendance, et les cœurs larges ouverts/ A ce fier sentiment qui dans mon âme vibre,/ se sacrifieront tous pour faire Haïti libre !.../ *Aya, aya bombé !...* »[239]
>
> ["KAONABO : "Wherever the foreigners might appear in Bohio, / I will wage war, a fatal war! / Amongst my people will I breathe new life into *this eternal hate* / that overflows my heart. (*Then, as if enlightened*). Yes, *posterity* / will grant my wish. In the name of liberty / they will all rise up, if of your slavery / they are made to one day

[238] I am indebted to Laurent Dubreuil, and to conversations we shared on this topic, for helping me think through the profound implications of this colorist label and its use within the literature of this period.
[239] Chauvet, pp. 138-9. My emphasis.

> suffer the chains and the affront; / *And then will be rendered gloomy and dreary* [lugubrera] among all of our green hills / the cry of Independence, and hearts, opened wide / at this proud feeling which in my heart resounds, / will all sacrifice themselves to make Haiti free!.../*Aya, aya bombé!*...”]

At first glance, Kaonabo’s final words appear to coincide with what Hoffmann has identified as a tendency towards prophecy in the Amerindian inspired literature[240]. After all, in the mode of the illuminated clairvoyant, Kaonabo anticipates the day in the distant future when the Haitian Revolution will put an end to foreign oppression on the island. However, as I have attempted to argue throughout my reading, this play—in opposition to a convention across Amerindian inspired works—continually employs a series of strategically placed historical limits and clever emplotment to resist any facile staging of Amerindian loss. Kaonabo’s prophetic speech act, as it is framed here, emerges not as the final pronouncement of a “dying chief,” speaking to the all-but exterminated human vestiges of a dying culture, as Hoffmann would otherwise be right in assuming, but, notably, as the victor in a series of military campaigns that largely succeeds in killing the island’s earliest European colonists. Furthermore, as Kaonabo shifts from a discussion of the near-future—the future he will live to see—to the distant future he can only perceive with an illuminated gaze, he surreptitiously glances over and occludes the annihilation of the Amerindian population. His equivocal allusion to “la postérité,” in the context of the population that will enact his wish, suggests not only the possibility of reading the nineteenth century Haitians as the inheritors of his anticolonial cause but as legitimate consanguine relations, and thus forecloses any reading of a comprehensive Amerindian eradication. We will see

[240] “In fiction dealing with Indians, a dying chief or priest frequently prophesizes that the white oppressors will meet retribution at the hands of the heroes of Haitian Independence.” Hoffmann, p. 110.

why Chauvet goes to such lengths to defer or occlude the historically inescapable fact of colonialism and asymmetric warfare upon the fifteenth century Amerindian population in a moment, but first we need to gaze with Kaonabo as his prophetic glance into the future locks eyes with Dessalines.

There is a certain performativity to the presence of the expression, "la postérité," in the 1804 Proclamation to the Nation. The term first appears during Dessalines' explicit invocation of the anticolonial praxis that postcolonial Haitians should imitate from the island's first inhabitants. "Imitons ces peoples qui […] appréhendant de laisser *à la postérité* l'exemple de la lâcheté, ont préféré être exterminés que rayés du nombre des peuples libres » ["Let us imitate those people who […] fearing to leave to posterity the example of their cowardice, preferred to be exterminated rather than stricken from among the number of free peoples of the world."](Proclamation 1804, my emphasis). Compare this, for example, to the text's second, and final, invocation, now in the nineteenth century context. "Jurons à l'univers entier, *à la postérité,* à nous-mêmes […] de mourir plutôt que de vivre sous sa domination » ["Let us take an oath before the entire universe, *to posterity,* to ourselves […] to die rather than to live under domination."] (Proclamation 1804, my emphasis). In other words, and as a comparison of the two citations reveals, part of the anticolonial ethics upon which the emerging and fragile postcolonial nation was to be built involved a commitment to the principle and to one's progeny that life without liberty was not worth living. Furthermore, the renewed commitment in the present—the second invocation—performs the imitation which Dessalines called for in the first. Dessalines's Haitians can renew the oath because they can identify themselves as

descendants, *la postérité*, of an anticolonial cause originating in Kaonabo's aboriginal period ("Aya, aya bombé").

Though there are other moments of transhistorical citationality in this passage I have quoted above, the most important for the argument I am advancing about the temporal play of the piece is no doubt Kaonabo's illuminated and self-conscious quotation of the Dessalinian neologistic usage of "lugubre" as a verb in the 1804 Proclamation. Speaking to the reaction that his posterity would have upon finding themselves enslaved, Kaonabo prophesizes, "Alors 'lugubrera' dans tous nos mornes verts, / le cri d'indépendance" ["And then will be rendered gloomy and dreary among all of our green hills / the cry of independence"] (139). That is, it is as if Kaonabo is not only witness to that morning on January 1st, 1804 when Dessalines lamented the continued presence of (the) French in now-Haitian institutions, but, in uttering a gloss on Dessalines's neologism, Kaonabo becomes the agent by which Dessalines can act as both origin (*Kaonabo quotes Dessalines*) and imitator (*Kaonabo precedes Dessalines*) of an anticolonial practice.

Earlier, I asked the reader to ponder over the question of why *La fille du Kacik*—which is an inescapably anticolonial text—goes to such great lengths to occlude the violent consequences of colonial occupation; I would like to begin my response by way of a detour, that is, by posing yet another, but intimately related question: why is the work so invested in forcing an identification between Kaonabo and Dessalines when, I should note, Haitian intellectuals have often read Caonabo as a precursor not to Dessalines but to Toussaint Louverture? Why, in other words, occlude a Louverturian reading of Kaonabo?

A survey of the Amerindian inspired literature (even going as far back as Vastey) reveals that the possibility of linking the two figures was readily available for reflection, "Le malheureux! Il [Caonabo] éprouva le même sort de l'infortuné Toussaint Louverture » ["Oh, unfortunate one ! He [Caonabo] suffered the same fate as the misfortunate Toussaint Louverture"] (Vastey, 8). Admittedly, for Vastey, their identification is based more on the unfortunate fate they shared at the hands of Europeans than on any innate or autonomously shared characteristics. Yet this comparison—perhaps first formulated here—holds sufficient sway that nearly one century later the author of Chauvet's very own preface resorted to a similar phrasing to articulate not only the bond between Toussaint and Caonabo but his view of the cyclical nature of history. "Pouvons-nous nous rappeler l'arrestation de Toussaint Louverture que l'on fit traitreusement prisonnier et qui mourut torturé par le faim et le froid, sans penser à Caonabo qui fut abîmé dans l'océan, les mains chargées de fer ? » ["Can one recall the arrest of Toussaint Louverture, who was treacherously imprisoned and put to death by hunger and cold, without thinking of Caonabo, who sunk into the ocean, his hands weighed down in chains?"] (Chauvet, 16). In fact, the collection of poetry published by the twentieth century poet, Félix Desroussels, *Sur les traces de Caonabo et de Toussaint Louverture* (1953), attests to the longstanding hold of the metonymic identification between these two figures of Haitian history. Why, then, does Chauvet so willfully break with tradition in reaching for Dessalines and largely foreclosing an identification with Toussaint?

Part of the answer, I would argue, lies in the text's resistance to any possible monumentalizing of the Amerindian dead. Via Dessalines, Chauvet has provided

Kaonabo and the other Caciques with a slogan, "Aya, aya bombé," that serves as the extreme limit of their anticolonial strategies, namely death, and provides a justification for that death—*the dying-for*—as the preservation of personal and territorial sovereignty. What he does not do, however, is stage that death at almost any level; as a result, the text does not call on us, as readers, to mourn the Amerindians *as dead* because nearly every detail of the text has been carefully calibrated to cast the very death we know to be there, into its margins. In the play's limited historical scope—ending as it does before the return of Spanish reinforcements and the treachery that led Caonabo to be captured— Kaonabo emerges only as the victor of the earliest anticolonial struggles and seemingly unattached to his historically hanged wife and poet, Anacaona. Furthermore, and to return to our question from earlier, the purpose of painting the later Haitians as his posterity and willfully overlooking the precipitous and devastating decline of the early sixteenth century Amerindian population of 'Haiti,' is to refuse to acknowledge their death. The only seeming exceptions to the invisibility of loss are the deaths of Rodrigo (a Spaniard) and Kaonabo's daughter Mamona who not only kills herself (for love, rather than in the defense of the Amerindian territory) but, as we mentioned earlier, is an entirely fictional character serving to supplant the historical Higuenamota.

In turning to anticolonial models that resisted death, Chauvet could have looked to the Cacique Henri rather than to Caonabo but Henri's methods of resistance, as recounted by Nau, did not seem drawn from a sufficiently similar playbook. While Henri's caciquat called for the armed opposition to the forced labor established by the Spanish, Nau suggests that Henri did not seek to eradicate the increasingly implanted

structures of Spanish colonialism, but rather that he sought only to carve out a space within the colony where the remnants of his people could peacefully await the end of their days. As a result, his antislavery did not express itself as an anticolonialism and, as we saw, Henri's subjects quietly blended into the Spanish population. In contrast, Kaonabo's language—like Dessalines'—is couched in a radical antislavery that can only be expressed in the anticolonialism which it takes as its condition of possibility. Take, for example, the following bellicose and anthropophagic prose from Kaonabo's areyto: "Car mon coteau de scalpe en leurs fronts monstrueux, / mettra son cercle à leurs sanglants cheveux/ […] / Je blanchirai leurs crânes en cikaye,/ pour boire de longs traits, plein d'écume, leur sang,/[…]/ Pour bien combattre et chasser l'esclavage » ["And so my scalp-shaving blade in their monstrous foreheads, / will carve out a circle at their bloodied hairline/ […] / I will bleach their skulls in *cikaye*, / to better drink by unhurried mouthful their blood, full of foam, / […] / So that slavery might be better fought and chased away"] (Chauvet, 116-7).

Recalling the nineteenth century premonitory texts with which I began my reading of the Amerindian literature, I would like to further postulate that the spectral use of Dessalines (wholly present in his absence) allows us to gaze upon the state of the space of historical experience, in Koselleck's sense, that was informing possible prognoses about the eventuality of an occupation by the emerging American presence in the Caribbean in the present. That, in Chauvet, the 15th century Kaonabo appears possessed by the rhetoric of the first Haitian head of State matters little as spaces of

experience, like psychoanalytic time, ultimately care little for chronology [241]. Speaking on precisely that matter, Demesvar Delorme noted as early as the 1870s the imminent danger that American colonization posed to the young Caribbean nation. "Ce danger n'est plus lointain comme dans le temps où l'on prévoyait seulement qu'il pouvait venir ; il est arrivé. Il est là à présent. Pressant dans notre île, à nos portes. Le drapeau de la République de l'Amérique du Nord flotte à Samana" ["This danger is no longer distant as in those days when one merely foresaw that it might reach us; it has arrived. It is here, now. Urgently present in our island, at our doors. The flag of the North American Republic waves at Samana"] (Delorme, 133).[242]

Read in this way, all of the curious historical features of the text cohere. Only the Kaonabo of 1493—that is, prior to his betrayal—and the vigorous Dessalines of the Proclamation of 1804 serve as anticipatory models for the precise late nineteenth century anticolonial struggles that Delorme, Coicou and others so readily foresaw. To focus on Louverture would likely have required placing the emphasis either on Toussaint's earlier period as General and Colonial Governor—and thus on an antislavery compatible with French Citizenship, colonialism and partial autonomy [243] —*or* the ultimately failed armed resistance Toussaint led against Napoleon's attempt to reinstate slavery in the French overseas territories[244]. In the case of the former, the potential, if strained, overlap between antislavery and

[241] « It makes sense to say that experience based on the past is spatial since it is assembled into a totality, within which many layers of earlier times are simultaneously present, without, however, providing any indication of the before and after." Koselleck, Reinhart. *Futures Past.* Cambridge, Mass : MIT Press, 1985. P. 273.
[242] Delorme, Demesvar. *Réflexions diverses sur Haïti*. Paris : F. Dentu, Libraire-Editeur, 1873. [1976] p. 133.
[243] I am thinking here of the features of Louverture's infamous Constitution of 1801. Janvier, pp. 7- 24.
[244] Césaire, p. 322.

colonialism mutes the analogical applicability of the text to a now internationally recognized independent Haitian state and to the changes in nineteenth century Caribbean geopolitics. In the case of the latter, it is impossible to ignore either the failure of Toussaint's later anticolonial as antislavery mission or the death that he ultimately suffered once imprisoned by the French. As I have noted earlier, it is precisely those features that most allowed for the identification between Toussaint and Caonabo that Chauvet eliminates from his text as they could potentially point to not only a troubling supplemental history of the failure of anticolonial resistance and of the deaths that subsequently follow throughout the Haitian past, but also create a horizon of expectations in which a future of defeat, colonization and enslavement were visible once more[245].

Ultimately, however, the text's resistance to a representation of death as the result of a conscious decision to fight colonialism—interested, as it is, more in staging the limited moment where foreign colonial threats to the indigenous land are both containable and futural as in Kaonabo's final pronouncement—renders it incapable of enacting the gesture of monumentalization. Monuments require, as we noted in the opening to this section, an identification both of the dead *as dead* and a progeny which identifies themselves not only with the dead but assigns their deaths a meaning in which they too can see themselves. In aligning Kaonabo and Dessalines against the backdrop of the late nineteenth century, Chauvet provides us with actors who assign a meaning to their deaths ("Aya bombé") but do so while they are still alive thus short-

[245] The use of the obscure Article 54 of the 1864 Code Rural, more commonly known as the corvée, or forced labor provision, by the American Marines during their occupation confirms the suspicions that Haitians intimated between the foreign possession of the land and dispossession of the body. Dubois, pp. 239, 243.

circuiting later attempts to attribute significance to the dead. The same cannot be said of the following text, *Anacaona: poème dramatique en vers et en trois actes et un tableau*, written after the successive and overlapping failures of Caonabo, Toussaint and even Dessalines, that is, in the period of American occupation.

Anacaona, the ever-mourned queen

It is difficult to overstate the importance that the Amerindian inspired literature has granted to the female Cacique, poet, and wife of Caonabo, Anacaona. Not only do Henri and Caonabo lack a similar appeal—despite their relative popularity—but it is clear from the emphasis in Vastey, Madiou, and Nau's narratives that none of the historians appeared to have anticipated the pliability and import that the tale of the life and death of the Amerindian queen would have upon future writings. After all, and as I briefly mentioned earlier, even before the wave of Amerindian inspired literature of the 1890s, Anacaona had already been the subject of romantic poet, Coriolan Ardouin's "Floranna, la fiancée" and had been featured in Tertullien Guildbaud's collection of nationalist poems, *Patrie et souvenirs* (1885). She appeared in the aforementioned *Areytos: Poésies indiennes* (1892) by Arsène Chevry as well as a later sonnet, "La douleur d'Anacaona" in J.J. Villaire's *Aube. Sonnets indiens: Poésies* (1914). Anacaona is central to other prose works such as Emile Nau's novel *La reine Anacaona* (1931), the short story, "Le dit de la Fleur d'Or," in Jacques Stéphen Alexis's collection *Romancero aux Etoiles* (1960) and even a recent adaptation of the queen's life by Edwidge Danticat for young adult audiences (*Anacaona: Golden*

Flower, Haiti, 1492 (2005)). It is, however, in theatrical works, too numerous to list here, that the subject of Anacaona's life has been expounded upon most notably.

What is somewhat surprising is that as the texts became more manifestly Amerindian in their content, Anacaona emerges as arguably *the* central figure of this heterogeneous, diachronic body of work I am referring to as the Amerindian inspired literature. Furthermore, this preference for Anacaona, ultimately over and above Henri or Caonabo, I would argue, has clear implications for the ways in which Amerindian history can be incorporated and mobilized by late nineteenth and twentieth century Haitian intellectuals. Said another way, figuring the Spanish massacre of Anacaona and her subjects as the focal point of Amerindian history—as many of these texts do—requires that the articulation between the Amerindians and Haitians be conceived of in a different way than was the case of Kaonabo's early 1493 victory over the Spanish. For the purposes of our argument here, I have decided to focus on the play, *Anacaona: poème dramatique en vers et en trois actes et un tableau*. The 1927 play takes place during a very brief period preceding the massacre of the inhabitants of the Xaragua province and largely recounts the arrangements of the members of Anacaona's royal court as they prepare to receive the newly appointed Spanish Governor and Captain General of the Indies: Nicolas Ovando. It is in the hopes of inspiring a new era of genuine trust between Europeans and Amerindians—her husband had, after all, been captured with a ruse—that Anacaona spares no expense in organizing her diplomatic welcome.

Despite the spirit of festivities in the air, the time occupied by *Anacaona* (1927) is much less optimistic about the near-future than Kaonabo had been in *La*

Fille du Kacik. In some sense this can be partially explained by the changes between the colonial landscape of 1493 and the setting, a decade later, of the violence that would befall the Xaragua. In the intervening decade Caonabo's remains, like Glissant's chains, now lay at the bottom of the Atlantic, the system of *compartimientos*, allowing for the forced labor of Indians and their redistribution among plots of land owned by Spanish masters, had been officialized; and, perhaps most importantly, the Battle of the Vega Real (1495), decisive in the eyes of Nau, had been lost, and with it, the possibility of any effective military resistance to Spanish colonization[246]. Much of the discussion in *Anacaona*, then, will focus on the potentialities, the possible paths that are still thinkable in the now inescapably colonial Amerindian future.

One of the voices for articulating a future appears early on in the play and takes the form of Mataba, the "vieille Sibylle indienne" ["old Amerindian Sibyl"] according to the description of the dramatis personae. While the other characters in the opening scene discuss the optimal placement of a seemingly inconsequential bouquet of flowers so that they might best please the Spanish, Mataba suddenly bursts out, "La race! Elle mourra; les autres l'ont juré" [The race ! It will die out ; the others have sworn it"] (Burr-Reynaud and Hippolyte, 5)[247]. Mataba seems, then, to close off the very possibility of a sustained future by placing the extinction of the Amerindians within the visibility and relative certainty of the future tense. That here, as elsewhere, the royal palace attendants attempt to neutralize her negative eschatology by critiquing

[246] Nau, p. 139

[247] Burr-Reynaud, Frédéric and Dominique Hippolyte. *Anacaona: poème dramatique en vers et en trois actes et un tableau.* Port-au-Prince, Haiti : Imprimerie Telhomme, 1941. p. 5.

the subject position from which she speaks—"vieille folle," ["old fool"] snipes Silboa (6)—Mataba nevertheless succeeds in instilling a sense of pessimism, doubt, and caution among the others.

Mataba's later recitation of the prediction that she heard within the sacred grotto, however, makes it clear just how little distance she allows between the space of experience and the horizon of expectations in the end-times of the Amerindians; that is just how little agency she allows for possibilities of imagining alternate, open futures in the face of an established Spanish colonization.

> MATABA : « Elle est, [la prédiction], en traits de fer, dans ma mémoire inscrite./ *(récitant d'une voix monotone et solennelle*) / Hélas ! le malheur va venir/sur votre terre heureuse ;/ comme un tombeau pour l'avenir/ un grand trou noir se creuse / Les dieux interrogés l'ont dit:/ la foudre se prépare/dans l'horreur d'un destin maudit/qu'aucun espoir ne pare/ Pleurez, enfants ; courbez vos fronts/Sous le vent de colère ; / en trombe, viennent les affronts/ de l'homme à face claire. / […] / Qui peut empêcher l'Etranger/ d'envahir le rivage/ et de venir vous outrager/ Dans son ardeur sauvage ? » « Allez ! Vous serez piétinés/ par des races plus fortes !/ Les éléments sont déchaînés/ Les libertés sont mortes »[248]

> ["MATABA : [The prediction] is, in iron strokes, inscribed into my memory. / (*reciting in a monotonous and solemn voice*) / Alas! Calamity will strike/ upon your joyful land; / like a tombstone for the future/ a great black hole emerges / The gods, consulted, have said it: / the thunderclouds gather / in the horror of a cursed fate / that no hope can diminish. / Weep, children; bow your heads / Under a furious wind; / like a torrent, come the insults/ of the fair-skinned man. / […] / Who can stop the Foreigner / from invading the shore/ and coming to insult you / in his savage zeal?" "Go on! You will be stamped out/ by more powerful races! / The elements have been unleashed/ Liberties have died!""

Though we can detect a similar sense of urgency in this prediction as in the first scene, what should be clear is the shift from the approaching death of the race ("elle mourra") ["it will die"] to an impression that here we are mourning its completely futural ("le Malheur *va venir*") ["Calamity will strike"] yet already realized extinction ("l'horreur d'un destin maudit") ["the horror of a cursed fate"]. Indeed, this could not be any more evident than in the metaphor of the tomb that

[248] Burr-Reynaud and Hippolyte, pp. 22-4.

Mataba places at the horizon of expectation for the future, the black hole beyond which no projection of the future can escape. As a result, if Mataba asks her interlocutors to grieve over their own deaths it is because they have little (indeed no) hope of changing the cataclysmic course that Amerindian history must now take. "Allez! Vous *serez* piétinés/ par des races plus fortes! / Les éléments sont déchaînés / *les libertés sont mortes*" ["Go on ! You *will be* stamped out / by more powerful races! / The elements have been unleashed / *liberties have died*"] (24, my emphasis) ! The temporality of Mataba's solemn prediction thus largely overlaps with the unsettling paradoxical location in which Nau placed the Cacique Henri—both after the end and in anticipation of it—and confirms our suspicions that *here* we are to see the narrative of the life and death of Anacaona as a, if not *the*, defining moment, the very point of inflection on the arc of Amerindian history which could be appropriated to speak for later anti/post/colonial apprehensions on the part of Haitians.

Given the seeming irreversibility and immutability of what Mataba has seen, it is admittedly somewhat surprising to uncover another voice within the text that claims to open wide the possibilities of an Amerindian future. It is even more surprising that the *overture* should come from none other than the Captain General, Nicolas Ovando, himself. Ovando hints at a renewed potential for the Amerindian future when he first meets the queen at the end of the second act and thus posits the explicit, if facile, link between the future and reproduction. "D'un superbe avenir nous jetons la semence, / et c'est pour l'Indien le bonheur qui commence » ["Of a marvelous future do we now sow the seed, / and for the Indian it is true happiness that begins"] (54). The unity of the two peoples, symbolized by the coming together of Anacaona and Ovando, he

suggests, generates, or (re)produces the time which extends into the future in that place where Mataba had only seen death. And yet, the gift of time comes at a price. « Allons ! n'y pensons plus ! ces temps-là sont passés./ Puisque notre union, ô reine ! vient de faire,/ pour l'heure de vos sujets, le traité nécessaire ;/ et pour mieux travailler au plus bel avenir, / n'allons pas rallumer le feu du souvenir/ Oui, vivons le présent avec toute sa joie » ["Go on now ! Let's not dwell on it any longer ! Those times have passed. / Because our union, oh queen! Has just made / for the time of your subjects, the necessary treaty; / and in order to better work upon the most beautiful future, / let us not rekindle the fires of memory/ Yes, let us live in the present in all of its joy"] (63-4). Thus it is only at the cost of their history, their memories—in short, the Amerindian space of colonial experience—that their now beautiful so-called collective future can be built. Ultimately, what Henri, Mataba and Ovando share, to varying degrees, is the realization that a future without the Spaniards was no longer possible.

Anacaona had already made it clear, however, that the memories that Ovando would have her barter away included not only the atrocities committed by Ovando's predecessors but the past promises of progress and civilization which were never realized and which could never be reached in the mode of the future, however *perfect* it may be. "Oui, l'on nous promettait des fermes agricoles,/ des outils pour nos champs, des routes, des écoles, / Mais l'Espagnol toujours en fier conquistador,/ n'obéissait qu'au soin d'amasser le plus d'or » ["Yes, we were promised great farms, / tools for our fields, roads, schools, / but the Spaniard, always the proud conquistador, / obeyed only his desire to amass the most gold"] (59). If anything, Anacaona's rebuke should sound surprising in that her criticisms of the Spanish appear uncharacteristic

for the early modern European settler empires; her request that the Spanish establish large-scale changes in infrastructure in exchange for their use of otherwise sovereign land is an obvious retort to the civilizational discourses of nineteenth and twentieth century colonial enterprises. In other words, if the twentieth century American marines had found in Caonabo a justification for their extraordinary violence, twentieth century Haitians could turn to his fifteenth century wife, Anacaona, to vocalize their criticism of the failures of American modernization via the *corvée*[249]. But it is not only the memories of promises left unfulfilled that Anacaona brandishes against Ovando in order to resist his increasingly literal language of union.

> OVANDO : « *Mes pouvoirs, l'avenir*, je mets tout dans tes mains, / et ta patrie aura de joyeux lendemains/ si seulement, tu veux, ce soir, que je t'embrasse. » ANACAONA : « Ah ! non ! pas cela ! » OVANDO : « Pourtant… » ANACAONA : « C'est toute ma race ; / c'est le cher souvenir de Caonabo/ qui dort, insatisfait, dans son glauque tombeau, / que j'aurais pollué si, dans l'impur mystère/ je vous donnais, ce soir, un baiser adultère[250]
>
> [OVANDO : "*My powers, the future*, I place it all in your hands, / and your homeland will have joyous tomorrows / if only you would permit, this night, a kiss to accept." ANACAONA: "Ah! No! not that!" OVANDO: "And yet…" ANACAONA: "It is my entire race; / it is the dearest memory of Caonabo/ who lies, discontent, in his murky tomb, / that I would have tarnished if, in this impure mystery / I were to grant you, this night, an adulterous embrace."]

If, as Ovando, asserts, his colonial powers explicitly include a jurisdiction over the future (*mes pouvoirs, l'avenir)*, his potential capacity to engender an endless sequence of joyous tomorrows, Anacaona retorts that the bond between the Amerindian present and its past, conceived here as both a collective and personal mourning of "le souvenir du feu" ["the memory of the fallen"] Caonabo, husband and respected warrior chieftain, impedes the payment of historical tribute which Ovando demands be stomped out ("le feu du souvenir") (the fires of memory). Growing ever

[249] Dubois, p. 243.
[250] Burr-Reynaud and Hippolyte, p 70. My emphasis.

more desperate, Ovando expands his once limited powers to the entire timeline of human history. "OVANDO: Un baiser, et vos malheurs passés,/ votre présent, votre avenir…» ANACAONA : « Non ! » OVANDO : « Tout se change en félicité… ! (silence) Non ? » ANACAONA : « Pas à ce prix étrange » » ["OVANDO: 'A kiss and your past misfortune, / your present, your future…' ANACAONA : 'No !' OVANDO : 'And all becomes happiness…! (silence) No?' ANACAONA: 'Not at such a strange price'"] (72). Even assuming that the engendered future would be different and improved under Ovando's stewardship, it is unclear how he hoped to alter the affective orientations that Anacaona and other Amerindians held with the past of their dead. Indeed, even if he could suddenly render *felicitous* promises once blithely ignored by his predecessors, he could still not repay the massive debt of Amerindian lives lost. Anacaona's continued and reiterated refusal acknowledges the obvious discrepancy between the nature of the debt and the exchange which Ovando is proposing.

It is at this point, after having been twice rebuffed by the Amerindian queen, that Ovando will, fully believing himself in control of the Amerindian future, threaten to create a future that now overlaps with the imminent extermination that Mataba foresaw. He thus confirms Kant's once sardonic affirmation that it is easy to prophesize what you yourself bring about[251]. In an unimaginably perverse usage of Christian imagery that Haitian literature has never forgotten, Ovando brought his hand to the Cross of Alcantara and gave the signal to eliminate the queen and her

[251] « Mais comment une histoire *a priori* est-elle possible? –Réponse : si le dévin *fait* et organise lui-même les événements qu'il annonce à l'avance. » ["But how is an *a priori* history possible ? --Answer: if it is the seer himself who organizes the events that he announces in advance." Kant. *La philosophie de l'histoire.* Paris : Editions Montaigne, 1947. P. 216.

subjects [252]. Reinserting the tomb at the immediate horizon of Amerindian expectations, Ovando justified his actions to the still-breathing queen with all the tone of a divine condemnation. "OVANDO: Puisque j'offre la paix sans arrière-pensée/ et que vous dédaignez mon offrande—insensée !/ Vous perdez sans retour l'heureuse occasion/ d'avoir chez vous : progrès et civilisation… » ["OVANDO : Since I have offered you peace without an ulterior motive/ and you rejected my offer out of hand—senseless woman!/ You forever lose the fortunate possibility / of having among you : progress and civilization…"] (76).

The portrait of mourning

Especially attentive readers are likely to have retained, with a certain curiosity, the notion that *Anacaona* is a tragedy told in three acts and a concluding 'tableau'. As the third act culminates with Ovando's imperative that the eponymous queen be lead to the gallows—"La potence!"— we might rightly expect the tale to end there. Yet, it does not. The short tableau, whose function we will provisionally reduce to that of an epilogue, takes place soon after the events of the third act. As the curtain rises the spectator is witness to the inert body of the hanged queen ostensibly under the supervision of two Spanish soldiers who have allowed their fatigue to get the better of them. During the span of the brief scene that is the tableau, two characters will

[252] See, for example, the final chapter, "Dernier Sommeil," of the recently published *L'énigme du retour* (2010) by Dany Laferrière and, in particular, these lines taken from the closing page: « De modestes maisons dispersées dans le paysage./ Rien ici pour rappeler le génocide indien/ si savamment orchestré par l'Espagnol./ La main sur sa croix d'Alcantara/ Nicolás de Ovando donna le signal d'un massacre/ que la mémoire arawak se refuse à oublier ». ["Modest homes dispersed upon the countryside. / Nothing here that would remind one of the genocide of the Indians/ so skillfully orchestrated by the Spaniard. / With his hand on the cross of Alcantara/ Nicolás de Ovando gave the signal for a massacre / that the Arawak memory refuses to forget."] Laferrière, Dany. *L'énigme du retour.* Montréal : Les Editions du Boréal, 2010. p. 286.

approach the body and, in their own way, come to terms with the loss of the most famous Amerindian poet of early modern 'Haiti'. Given the unexpected importance that the life and death of Anacaona have come to have in Haitian history[253] and the voices in the play which articulated the Amerindian future, it is perhaps not surprising that the characters speaking in the time after Anacaona should be Mataba and Ovando. In concluding my reading of the play, I would like to argue that the tableau, explicitly acting as a supplement (*trois actes et un tableau*), allows *Anacaona* to both acknowledge the death of and stage the mourning for the Amerindians of aboriginal 'Haiti' in a way that *La Fille du Kacik*, by forcing an identification with the Dessalinian postcolonial moment, structurally could not.

The tableau, and thus the play, ends not with the hanging of the queen—a visual detail that has notably been relegated to the gap between the time of the text proper and the tableau—but with the funerary song of the grieving Mataba. Genuflecting beside the fallen ruler, Mataba begins a solemn areyto whose spectacular importance is signaled by the sudden preference for rhyming triplets over the text's customary rhyming couplets. "Rien ne peut consoler la peine qui m'accable, /sinon l'espoir, qu'un jour, la justice implacable,/ punira sous le ciel ta mort inexplicable » ["Nothing can console the grief which overwhelms me, / if not the hope that one day, justice, tenacious, / will punish, under the heavens, your unexplainable death"] (86). Though speaking here in the relatively agency-free mode of what is hoped, Mataba's quasi-prophecy succeeds in opening a relatively limited future: history must extend

[253] "Nous sommes tous les fils de la Fleur d'Or [Anacaona] […] J'ai vu de mes yeux la Fleur d'Or voler et danser au devant des bataillions fanatisés de l'Empereur Dessalines ». ["We are all the sons of the Golden Flower [Anacaona] […] I have seen with my own eyes the Golden Flower fly and dance in front of the fanatical battalions of the Emperor Dessalines."] Alexis, pp. 176-7.

long enough to ensure that justice is served, that is, until the death of Anacaona has been avenged. In other words, we can recognize, from both the judgment (of the Europeans) placed at the foreseeable 'end' of time and the ineffable quality of what is to be expected after vengeance, "Mais tu sais que les blancs quitteront cette terre..." ["But you know that the whites will leave this land…"] (87), that Mataba ushers in the time and logic of eschatology. And similar to other eschatologies, as the major events that make up the history have already been sketched out—largely, the crime and the awaited punishment— Mataba is relatively uninterested in the now largely empty time of waiting until the great judgment of history has been realized. As proof we need only note the speed with which Mataba passes from what we might recognize as the origin of the Atlantic Slave Trade to the seemingly imminent confrontations inherent in Hegel's now-Haitian master-slave dialectic[254]. "Ils iront enlever d'un très lointain ravage,/ des noirs qu'ils maintiendront ici, dans l'esclavage,/ Mais ils en subiront la bravoure sauvage » ["They will go and kidnap from a faraway shore, / blacks which here they will keep in the bonds of slavery, / but they will suffer at the hands of their savage bravery"] (86). Mataba thus confirms what Koselleck has said of the distinction between two discursive and increasingly policed regimes for speaking the future: prognosis and prophecy. "Le pronostic produit le temps qui l'engendre et dans lequel il se projette, tandis que la prophétie apocalyptique, elle, détruit le temps dont la fin est précisément sa raison d'être » ["Prognosis produces the time that creates it and

[254] Buck-Morss, Susan. *Hegel, Haiti and Universal History.* Pittsburgh, Pa: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2009.

in which it is projected, whereas the apocalyptic prophecy destroys the time whose end is precisely its reason for being"] (Koselleck, 28).[255]

Furthermore, and as is the case with the temporality of Christian eschatology, which considers those events following the great judgment as outside of the purview of human history and vision, Mataba cannot speak to what follows the moment when Dessalines's army will have avenged the murder of the Amerindians. The postcolonial era appears here, as we have already seen elsewhere, completely ineffable. Interestingly, the one person who could bear witness to the changes to come, to the *post* of the postcolonial, because of her privileged vantage point beyond death, is silenced by the very position from which she speaks. "Maintenant, tu vois tout dans l'immense mystère/ Les liens de la mort t'obligent à te taire " ["Now you see everything in that immense mystery / yet the bonds of death hold you to your silence"] (Burr-Reynaud and Hippolyte, 87). Ultimately, the ineffable of the paradise of the ever-lasting Haitian nation, ends the tableau and the play. And yet, given the political situation of 1920s occupied Haiti it might also be possible to read Mataba's closing words as an affirmation of the ultimate success of anticolonial resistance, that is, as a way of avenging the ancestors of 1804[256]. "Mais tu sais que les blancs quitteront cette terre…" ["But you know that the whites will leave this land"] (87).

The difference between Kaonabo's closing vision in *La Fille du Kacik* and Mataba's should now be clear. Superposed with the earliest moments of postcolonial

[255] Koselleck, Reinhart. *Le futur passé : Contribution à la sémantique des temps historiques.* Trad. Jochen Hoock and Marie Claire Hoock. Paris : Editions de l'école des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, 1990. P. 28.

[256] "Dorsinville watched the adults he knew sink into "stupor" and then "resignation." "The white [American] soldiers had come to defile our independence: where were the ancestors? Finally the ancestors were no more."" Dubois, p. 216.

independence, Kaonabo speaks in the mode of deterrent; Mataba speaks after the violent toll of colonialism is an established fact. Neither, however, and this is, to a great extent, one of my personal frustrations with the Amerindian inspired literature, can see beyond the "judgment of the Europeans" and the "vengeance of the Indians"; even reactivating Mataba's vision of retaliation onto the "second" Haitian independence, these texts fail to provide a blueprint for imagining or reimagining, as the case may be, the future of an independent Haitian nation. As long as the present is continually figured through the violence of its colonial pasts, the future can only be thought in the mode of cautious alert (à la Kaonabo) or allegorized into an ineffable, largely unknown paradise. This may explain, in part, the sense of disappointment experienced by Haitians following the departure of the American marines in 1934. "Many Haitians dreamed in 1934 that their country would *finally be able to move forward toward a radically different future.* Instead, they found that the years of subjugation were haunting them still" (Dubois, 267, emphasis mine). Once more, Dubois suggests, potential narratives of postcolonial Haiti were pulled into the orbit of its previous anticolonial struggles and their postcolonial trappings.

I began my reading of the tableau by noting its supplemental character; that is, that I saw it functioning both as an epilogue to what could be taken to be a self-contained tragedy of the hanging of the Amerindian queen *and* a critically important, indeed necessary, intervention which staged the call to avenge Anacaona's death required in order to articulate a link between Amerindian and Haitian history. Furthermore, I alluded to the fact that the tendency towards historical allegorization present in these plays had a significant effect on the ways in which each work could

represent Amerindian death and loss. I would now like to conclude my readings of both plays by returning to their deceptively parallel final scenes in order to examine the relationship these texts put on display between the living and the dead.

In the final scene of *La Fille du Kacik*, a stunned Kaonabo, incredulous to the point of blasphemy at the loss of his daughter, turns his attention to the corpse of Mamona's husband, the Spaniard, Rodrigo. Overcome with a desire to avenge the suicide of a daughter which he attributes to the actions of the Spanish, and Rodrigo in particular, Kaonabo contemplates, in the time of an instant, the possibility of assuaging his lust for vengeance on the lifeless body of Mamona's former lover. "Ah maudit étranger, / que je te haïs! Mon bras veut encore se venger / Sur ton cadavre impur… » ["Ah, cursed foreigner, / oh how I hate you ! My arm still seeks out vengeance/ on your impure cadaver"] (Chauvet, 138). Once that instant has passed, however, and Kaonabo realizes that Rodrigo's deceased condition not only prohibits the felicitous performance of the act of revenge but renders it illegible as vengeance, Rodrigo's inert body becomes the ground for an entirely different speech act. "Mais quelle est ma démence! / J'allais, moi, maltraiter un être sans défense? […] Ecoute, étranger vil qui dans le trépas dors,/ *Sur ton maudit cadavre et par l'enfer, je jure* / de mourir mille morts que de subir l'injure / de voir les tiens fouler le sol de Kibao ! » ["But what is this insanity ! / I was going to, me, mistreat a being without defense ? […] Listen, worthless foreigner who in his death slumbers, / *Upon your cursed cadaver and by hell itself, I swear /* to die a thousand deaths rather than suffer the insult / of seeing yours tread upon the land of Kibao!"] (138, emphasis mine). Rodrigo is thus placed in the rather curious position of being identified both as the

agent of Mamona's death and the figure which is immortalized in Kaonabo's call for violent retribution against all those who would threaten the Amerindian sovereignty of the island. In other words, while serving largely as the condition of possibility for her father's anger, it is not Mamona's death that is monumentalized in Kaonabo's final pronouncement. Indeed, Mamona forecloses the possibility of assigning her death any greater anticolonial or antislavery significance by explaining, in her own words, the reasons which led her to commit suicide. "Par notre hymen liée, ô mon époux, ta femme,/ doit te suivre en la tombe… » ["Bound by our marriage, oh, my husband, your wife/ must follow you to the grave…"] (136). The identification that is forged between the two epochs, then, is thus clearly not based on a logic of mourning for the white, foreign-born Rodrigo—Dessalines's proclamation cannot see the cadavers of the white dead in his call for national mourning either—but on the anticolonial hostility that Kaonabo threatens to pass on as inheritance between the still living. "Je lui ferai la guerre, une guerre mortelle ! / Aux miens j'insufflerai cette haine éternelle » ["I will wage war, a fatal war! / Amongst my people will I breathe new life into *this eternal hate*"] (138).

In contrast, the closing tableau in *Anacaona*, while featuring a surprising number of similar elements, stages an unavoidable confrontation with the body of the once-beloved Anacaona *as the explicit subject of colonial violence* and thus allows for monumentalizing readings that *La Fille du Kacik* forbids. The temptation that Rodrigo's body briefly offers Kaonabo is mirrored in the desire that Ovando expresses upon seeing the lying corpse of the still beautiful queen. "Ce corps inanimé, cette

femme si belle[257]/ que j'aimai tellement et qui se refusa / à mon pressant désir ? […] Je t'aimai, ma Fleur d'Or, et je t'aime toujours/ (*Il va l'embrasser*) / Ainsi, j'aurai baisé tes lèvres adorables…/ Vivante, tu m'as fui ; morte… » ["This lifeless corpse, this beautiful woman / whom I loved so much and which turned down/ my urgent desire? […] I loved you, my Golden Flower, and I will love you forever / (*He turns to kiss her*) / This way, I will have kissed your adorable lips…/ Living, you ran from me; dead…"] (Burr-Reynaud and Hippolyte, 85). The scene recalls what commentators of colonial discourses such as Laurent Dubreuil have said about the collusion between colonial and sexual violence in the phraseology of 'possession' that is so critical to colonialism[258]. Unlike Kaonabo, however, he will be interrupted not by the realization of the incongruity between his desire and the corpse that lies before him, but rather by the cry of the hidden Mataba which will cause him to hastily abandon the stage. It is only then, with Ovando permanently out of the picture, that Mataba can begin the work of monumentalizing the death of Haiti's *Fleur d'Or*. One important feature of Mataba's mourning song is the absence of any explicit justification for the murder of Anacaona. "La justice implacable/ punira sous le ciel ta mort inexplicable » ["justice, tenacious, / will punish, under the heavens, your unexplainable death"] (86). The unexplainable nature of Anacaona's death obliquely alludes to an ineffable wrong, yes, but it also allows 'future' generations—the play's spectators and Anacaona's survivors—to assign, in a manner similar to that of monuments, the significance of

[257] Anacaona's split ontology, gracefully compartmentalized into each *hémistiche* of the alexandrine verse, already suggests Ovando's easing of the taboo by which he is drawn.

[258] "L'ampleur de la possession contient une valeur érotique. *Posséder* se dit aussi pour désigner des rapports sexuels, allant généralement du masculin au féminin. » ["The scope of possession contains within it an erotic component. *To* possess is also said to designate sexual relations, generally going from masculine to feminine."] Dubreuil, p. 30.

that death[259]. To read Mataba's funerary song as a monumentalizing hymn requires that spectators articulate not only the *dying-for* of Anacaona but their relationship to the queen as survivors. Anacaona's persistent critique of the ever-deferred benefits of second-wave European imperialism as "progress," coupled with her violent death at the hands of those she nevertheless hoped could change their rapacious ways[260], effortlessly suggest a martyr's death[261]. Furthermore, that specter of slavery is never evoked within the context of the justification of her death. As we have seen Mataba anticipates the inaugural days of the slave trade but she does not, indeed cannot within the logic of the play, link enslavement to account for the death of Anacaona. This seemingly minor detail nevertheless limits the identificatory potential to which this narrative of Anacaona's life and death can be put. The continued emphasis that Mataba places in her oration is clearly not on radical antislavery—which is resolved in a single triplet—but on the anticolonial, persuading, more by the force of providence than of military resistance, that the island is destined to one day be free of its invaders. "Mais tu sais que les blancs quitteront cette terre…/ Il le faut ! Il le faut ! Cette nature en fête/ Où Houhou répand sa lumière parfaite, / ce n'est pas pour les blancs que les Zémès l'ont faite » ["But you know that the whites will leave this land…/ They must ! They must! Our festive countryside / where Houhou spreads his perfect light, / it is not

[259] As Koselleck insists this meaning is conferred by survivors and not the dead themselves. "Ce qui est sûr, c'est que le sens du "mourir pour… » tel qu'il est inscrit sur les monuments est fondé par les survivants et non par les morts ».["What is certain is that the meaning of the 'dying-for,' such as it is inscribed in monuments, is established by the survivors and not by the dead."] Koselleck, *L'expérience de l'histoire*, p. 137.

[260] It would be very difficult to argue that this Anacaona is acting out of a historically contingent desperation.

[261] This fact was not lost on others, including the young Saint Arnaud Numa whose retelling of the tragedy of the Xaragua forces the reading. *Ancaona: Reine martyr* (1981).

for the whites that the Zémès have made it"] (87). Unlike *La Fille du Kacik*'s Kaonabo, who had, much like the revolutionary Haitians, coupled the struggles of anticolonialism and antislavery as inseparable aims, *Anacaona* speaks to a time when the overwhelming looming threat had shifted to territorial sovereignty. As a result, it spoke strongly, and rather self-evidently, I would argue, to those Haitians under American occupation in a way that *La Fille du Kacik*, written at the turn of the previous century, no longer could.

Conclusions

It is often noted that there is a certain political expediency to which Amerindian inspired literature can be put to use; after all, it is argued, discussions of the Amerindian past allow for all Haitians, whether black or mulatto, to see themselves in a common, if fictive, kinship network of glorified anticolonial resistance while ignoring the racial castes of the present. That may well be true, at least partially, but such a claim alone cannot, as I hope to have shown here, account for the extent to which the history of the aboriginal population of the island was circulated and transformed again and again by nineteenth and early twentieth century intellectuals. After all, if the modern appropriation of the aboriginal nomenclature of the island provided the ground for national belonging it had not, at least initially, been as part of some "mulatto legend,"[262] or scheme, but rather, as the imperial constitution of 1805 documents rather clearly, as an erasure of racial difference in preference for the generic term, "black." The naming of the new nation, as we saw in both *Stella* and

[262] Nicholls, David. « A Work of Combat: Mulatto Historians and the Haitian Past, 1847-1867." *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 16.1 (Feb., 1974): 15-38. Web.

Ardouin's *Etudes*, seen either as a restitution or a restoration that sought to negate the French colonial period, generated a violent disturbance in the timeline of Haitian history that called for the incorporation of the aboriginal history of the island into the emerging national historical literature. In so doing that history gained an unexpected nationalist orientation (Nau), telos (Madiou), and allegorical suppleness (Fischer) that the now-defunct 15th century 'Haitians' and even their Spanish chroniclers would find largely surprising (Koselleck).

Beginning with Dessalines's 1804 Proclamation, I hoped to demonstrate that the will-to-relation with the Amerindian population—in a nascent, proto-identificatory mode certainly—was nevertheless present in the nation's founding document. In fact, Dessalines's call for imitation of the aboriginal population, framed as a struggle to the death in defense of an equivocal "liberty," granted later writers a wide degree of freedom in casting this "liberty" as either the sovereign right to one's territory or one's body or both. They could thus mobilize their narratives or pieces in the service of anticolonialism, antislavery or both according to the allegorical demands of their writings. However, as I have shown in Nau's treatment of the Cacique Henri as with Chauvet's rendition of Kaonabo, attempts to retrofit Haitian Revolutionary history into the Aboriginal period by means of a more or less felicitous allegory, also had a direct impact not only on the early colonial period that could be related (*La Fille du Kacik*) but on the significance that modern Haitians could take from the allegories (Nau's Cross). Ultimately and somewhat paradoxically, Dessalines's call for liberty or death likely came to inspire those later authors who sought to stage the moment of Aboriginal history Dessalines mentioned in the proclamation. That, I would argue, is

likely the genealogy of the phrase, "Aya bombé" found in so many Amerindian inspired texts.

So committed to the idea of an anticolonial-antislavery inheritance from the aboriginal population, the Amerindian inspired texts that form the corpus in question nevertheless have a difficulty figuring the moment of that inheritance. This temporal crisis of "the end of the aboriginal 'Haitians'" is to a large extent analogous to the frequent analepsis that we saw in the previous chapter. After all, if the land of Haiti was inherited from the aboriginal Haitians, if the modern Haitians are avenging their fallen predecessors with whom they share no immediate blood ties, what could serve to justify their claims as legitimate legatees? One solution, as we saw, involved the allusion to a mythic moment in which the two populations, one of the enslaved Amerindians and the other of the newly arrived Africans, recognized that the chains that bound them, bound them to each other. However, even Nau, who argued for the recognition of mutual misfortune as the basis for an imagined collective, did not, in his historical account, make note of when any such transethnic alliances would have taken place. Indeed, as we saw, "the end" of the aboriginal period of Haiti comes, not only as a supplement to "the end", but also rather calmly as the Amerindian population is absorbed into the greater Spanish colonial population of the island. And, while several texts allow the Spanish to voice a concern for the possibility of a transethnic alliance forming in response to their practices of enslavement[263], only one to my knowledge, Massillon Coicou's *L'oracle*, actually stages this fateful and legitimizing encounter,

[263] In some of the fictional accounts it is the Amerindians who demonstrate successful strategies of antislavery resistance, while in others it is the Africans who, more robust, are feared for inspiring in the Amerindians the spirit of resistance.

but does so at a level of abstraction that cannot be taken to be anything but that which it is: the desire to represent that ahistorical moment which so many texts had deemed unrepresentable. Like the uncertainty surrounding the origins of the modern appellation "Haiti," the moment of Amerindian-African inheritance remains largely occluded but not performatively mute: the inheritance is, after all, still felicitous.

Finally, in my closing readings of *La Fille du Kacik* and *Anacaona* I showed that a central limitation of the redeployment of Amerindian history as allegory was its always already colonial component. That is, largely unable to provide an account of the life-world of the aboriginal Haitians that would not already be mediated by European contact, the texts instead focus on the collapse of Amerindian institutions, the loss of life, and the foreseeable extinction that must nevertheless be resisted. The problem, of course, is that since this Aboriginal history *is* colonial history any historical lesson to be gained for an allegorization of this period could only apply to Haiti at a time in which colonization or the threat of colonization was a relevant concern. It is no wonder, then, that in the international political landscape of the early nineteenth century, when Haitian independence had not yet been recognized by the French and fears of a French *reconquista* were continually justified by French diplomatic duplicity, that Dessalines called upon the valor of an exemplary people, or that King Christophe, the former hotel manager, would claim Caribbean royal ancestry[264].

[264] « Seeking to make a symbolic connection with the indigenous peoples who once inhabited Haiti, Christophe occasionally even claimed that one of his ancestors was a native Caribbean ruler." Dubois, p. 62.

The resurgence of the Amerindianist theme in the late nineteenth century, after Haitian sovereignty had been accepted by the French crown, the papacy, and an increasingly split American nation, signals several important shifts. On the one hand, as we saw in Chauvet's introduction to Arsène Chevry's *Areytos: Poésies indiennes*, an analeptic leap to the Amerindian period allowed intellectuals to gloss over the tumultuous (and no doubt uncomfortable) first century of independence in favor of a more straightforward period where the national antagonists—slavery, colonialism, and their allies—were more readily identifiable[265]. On the other hand, the Amerindian inspired literature clearly allowed for the 'naturalization' of the modern inhabitants of Haiti and thus placed them in a "pre-colonial" position analogous to those aboriginals of the early fifteenth century. While this dangerously imminent colonial position was present in political tracts (Delorme) and the poetry of writers addressing contemporary issues (Coicou), it is evident that the Amerindianist literature in the style of *La Fille du Kacik* allowed for its expression while *simultaneously* avoiding a discussion of the politically and emotionally cumbersome recent past. Later, when that colonization came to be confirmed in the American occupation, the deaths of the Amerindian past could be given a new sense once more, as writers drew inspiration from the anticolonial struggles of their aboriginal predecessors. In this way, Anacaona's tragic and unforgiveable death at the hands of Ovando, could, and likely was, as Anacaona's critiques of Spanish promises unfulfilled in *Anacaona* attest, serve as a reminder of the

[265] Chauvet's insistence that young poets look to the years 1492-1804, explicitly cutting out the postcolonial years, thus reproduces in the Haitian national history the same logic that appears in the aboriginal historical record of 'Haiti.'

limits of trust and the importance of suspicion in twentieth century neo-colonial relations with the Americans.

If in this chapter I have emphasized the tendency of Haitian literature to return to "1492," in the following chapter, I want to examine the other endpoint of Chauvet's truncated history of Haiti, "1804." That is, I would like to read the early twentieth century texts of Haitian literature (1902-1934) that treat the year "1804" in light of the historical concept of "revolution," which contains within it, as we can still hear, both the astronomical sense of cyclical return *and* the modern usage, shaped by our contemporary understanding of history, as that which defines the new path of an ever-progressing society[266]. Writing during a visit to Haiti in the 1830s, Victor Schoelcher, who would later play a crucial role in the 1848 French abolition of slavery remarked, "It seems as if there is no future, there is no tomorrow."[267] The Haitian "Revolution" as it is later re-enacted, reinterpreted, and even resisted in the context of the centennial celebrations of 1904 and the American occupation will allow us to see if "revolution", seen from the twentieth century, will at last allow for the expression of an open future that neither Schoelcher, Bergeaud, or many of the writers of Amerindian literature could apprehend.

[266] Koselleck, *Le Futur Passé*, p. 65.
[267] As quoted in Dubois, p. 120.

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CHAPTER 3
THE GRAVITY OF REVOLUTION : INTERROGATING THE LIMITS OF REVOLUTIONARY DISCOURSE IN EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY HAITIAN LITERATURE

Introduction

Le Curé: Mais le plus grand mal c'est qu'il a ajouté que les nègres eux-mêmes avaient mis le feu, qu'ils étaient en pleine insurrection.
Léon : Insurrection…non, mais en révolte.
Le Curé : N'est-ce pas insurrection qu'il faut dire… ? Je croyais qu'en France cela s'appelait comme cela.[268]

[*The Priest : But the greatest harm is that he added that it was the blacks themselves who had started the fire, that they were in an all out insurrection.*
Léon: Not an insurrection…but rather a revolt.
The Priest: Shouldn't we rather say insurrection…? I thought that in France that's what it was called.]

The date was the night of the fourteenth of July 1789, in Paris, when Louis XVI heard from the Duc de la Rouchefoucauld-Liancourt of the fall of the Bastille, the liberation of the few prisoners and the defection of the royal troops before a popular attack. The famous dialogue that took place between the king and his messenger is very short and very revealing. The King, we are told, exclaimed, "C'est une révolte," and Liancourt corrected him: "Non, Sire, c'est une révolution."[269]

When, at the end of Frédéric Marcelin's 1902 novel of organized political resistance, *La vengeance de mama*, the fictional revolutionary leader, Josilus, buoyed by the tangible excitement in the air, at last addresses the sea of sympathetic supporters before him at the Place Pétion, he insists that this time will be fundamentally different. "Vive la révolution!" he cheers, « C'est vraiment une révolution *dans le sens réel du mot* que nous entendons inaugurer...S'il en était autrement, je ne serais pas ici » [Long live the revolution ! It is truly a revolution *in the real sense of the word* that we intend to bring about...If it were otherwise, I would

[268] De Rémusat, Charles. *L'habitation de Saint-Domingue ou l'insurrection.* Paris : CNRS, 1977. pp. 80-1.
[269] Arendt, Hannah. *On Revolution.* New York : Viking Press, 1963. pp.40-1.

not be here"].[270] Josilus's inaugural address, like Liancourt's corrective to the French king, underscores a semantic anxiety surrounding the concept of "revolution" that naturally leads us to a series of fruitful interrogations. After all, why was it that Josilus insisted not once ("vraiment"), but twice ("*le sens réel*"), that only his actions—unlike those of predecessors left implied—could lay claim to the true meaning of "revolution"? What *precisely* did Josilus mean by "revolution," what did he take as its *true* meaning? How did he articulate the relationship between violence and revolution—as opposed to other acts of violence in the political sphere—such that the relatively muted measures of force taken by his followers against the corrupt government in power were to be read as *something other* than another element in a sequence of insurrections, revolts, and civil wars which characterized what historian Laurent Dubois has called nineteenth-century Haiti's "oddly stable form of instability"?[271] It is relatively surprising, then, that "revolution"—as a political concept which became thinkable only within a modern understanding of history—has not been utilized more often to think through the Haitian Revolution. This is all the more surprising given that, as an Atlantic extension of the revolutionary events transpiring in France, without being limited to them, the Haitian "Revolution," in part, made the modern concept of "revolution" possible.

As we shall see, Josilus was not alone in interrogating the notion of revolution. In this chapter I will be primarily concerned with the ways in which Haitian literary

[270] Marcelin, Frédéric. *La vengeance de mama.* Paris : Société des éditions littéraires et artistiques, 1902. p. 266. Emphasis mine.

[271] "And yet Haiti enjoyed an oddly stable form of instability. While control of the national government in Port-au-Prince constantly shifted as the result of civil war, the local political structures in most of Haiti's regions remained largely unchanged." Dubois, Laurent. *Haiti: The Aftershocks of History*. New York: Metropolitan Books, 2012. p.169.

texts from the early twentieth-century mobilized, fabricated, recycled and ultimately criticized discourses pertaining to the "Haitian revolution," in the context both of the centennial of Haitian independence (1904) and in light of the territorial occupation of the nation by the United States (1915-1934), that is, moments in Haitian history which would have strongly primed the instinct to remain within the orbit of the Haitian Revolution. Periods, in other words, during which the appeal to reach for the readymade historical and political discourses of the anticolonial, because postcolonial, "1804" would have been at a fever pitch. In particular, I am interested in engaging with the emerging, though hardly ubiquitous, criticisms that sought to escape the pull of compressed, cyclical time (1804→1492→1804…) entirely by questioning the idea of the Revolution as a source of relevant political ideals in the twentieth-century. The notion that what was needed was not "the Revolution" of Dessalines but an altogether *new* Revolution, something that might bring about novel, unprecedented events in Haiti, exposed the tensions not only between two ways of conceptualizing the notion of "revolution"—as we will see—but the conflicting ways of organizing history of which each is a symptom. This is not to say, however, that the discursive engagements with the Revolution in literary texts—either overtly or recast through the literature of Amerindian inspiration—were diminished. But that, as in the case of the historical transformations I noted in the Amerindian texts (cropping of dates, selective amnesia, imagining possible, though ahistorical, lives), we see that in each completed orbit, each return to the point of national origin, something crucial has changed. The return to the origin is always imagined as felicitous even when it can be shown to be

otherwise. This chapter, then, will document these shifting articulations between Haitians and the foundational fictions of "revolution."

It is beyond the scope of our work to address the entire semantic evolution of the concept of "revolution" in the political sphere as Hannah Arendt does so cogently in *On Revolution* (1963), or in the realm of conceptual historiography as illustrated by Reinhart Koselleck in *Le futur passé* (1990); however, since any understanding of the discursive analysis to follow is impossible without a more precise vocabulary for discriminating between the varying justifications and forms of political violence which all came to reside under the same word, I turn now to a brief theorization of "revolution."

Nothing new under the Sun? : Arendt, Delorme, and Koselleck on 'Revolution'

"Revolution," even in our contemporary, unexamined usage, has at least two meanings that we commonly—and erroneously—take to be radically distinct. To be fair, this error is not ours alone; in fact, it can be traced nearly as far back as the moment when these two meanings, no longer bound to each other by metaphorical extension, implied radically different understandings of historical time. To prove this point Koselleck recounts the anecdote of the French scholar Haréau, who, writing in 1842, reminded his audience that "revolution," contrary to the meanings it had taken on since the French Revolution, had once meant—indeed, properly meant—a rotation, *a return to the point of origin*.[272] This meaning is not unknown to us; it is, after all, common in

[272] Koselleck, Reinhart. Trad. Jochen Hoock and Marie-Claire Hoock. *Le future passé: Contribution à la sémantique des temps historiques.* Paris : Editions de l'école des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, 1990. p.65.

astronomical usage, and no one would hesitate to describe the movement of celestial bodies in this way. While this astronomical use, first made famous by Copernicus' *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium* (1543), does convey the notion of return, Arendt is quick to note that crucial to the concept of "revolution" was the idea that the motion of return exhibited by the heavenly spheres was regular, bound, and obeyed a system of laws. Astronomical "revolution," could thus not contain within it—as our notion of political revolution does today—the idea of unexpected novelty or violence[273]. To what, then, do we owe the surprise that Haréau's reminder was supposed to instill?

According to Arendt, "revolution" was first applied as a political term in the seventeenth century. However, as a designation of political change, it did not stray far from the conceptual apparatus that the astronomical usage had made available to it through metaphor. That is, it was used to describe a *return back* to an established order; revolution in the political sense meant nothing more than a *restoration* of a once lost political regime.[274] Conceptualizing political shifts through metaphors drawn from nature presupposed not only a certain understanding of historical time—namely, that it was unfurling at a constant speed, and bound, like the seasons and the moon, in immanently predictable paths—but of human organization itself[275]. In this it became possible to understand political "revolution" through the notion of "repetition," since any change in the structure of the political order would result in a *return* to one from among a number of known political constitutional organizations, themselves limited in

[273] Arendt, p. 35.
[274] Arendt, p. 35-6.
[275] Koselleck, p. 66.

number by human nature.[276] Capturing exactly this spirit, the nineteenth-century Haitian political theorist, Demesvar Delorme, will write: "Il n'y a rien de nouveau sous le soleil; le mot est parfaitement juste. » ["There is nothing new under the sun ; that is precisely the right term."][277]

Yet, importantly, for Arendt, it is out of this desire for « restoration » that the notion of historical novelty—what Koselleck would diagnose as a growing distance between the space of experience and the horizon of expectations—came to introduce itself into to the concept. The actors of the French and American revolutions, she argues, "pleaded in all sincerity that they wanted to revolve back to old times when things had been as they ought to be" (Arendt, 37).[278] Once the revolutions were underway, however, the notion of "irresistibility," borrowed from the natural, astronomical metaphor—the course of the planets cares little for what men make of them—made of "revolutions," events in which men and women were not full participants.[279] Coupled with shifting understandings of historical time, the course of events became a violent torrent: unbounded, unpredictable, sweeping historical actors this way and that as history itself pleased. As the fictional plantation owner, Valombre, warns in Charles de Rémusat's post-Restoration *L'habitation de Saint-Domingue*, "Prends garde, prends garde, les révolutions sont de si terribles

[276] Arendt, p. 29; Koselleck, p. 68
[277] Delorme, Demesvar. *Les théoriciens au pouvoir: Causeries historiques.* Port-au-Prince : Editions Fardin, 1871. p. 31.
[278] While Arendt remained blind to the Haitian Revolution, it could be argued that the late-stage desire to *restore* Haiti to an imagined state of precolonial sovereignty is readily legible in the postcolonial nomenclature of Saint-Domingue. The umbrella term of "revolution" for the events of 1791 to 1804 makes it very difficult to distinguish between different aims and actors and to assign any sort of revolutionary ideals.
[279] Arendt, p. 40.

événements ! Quand on commence, on ne sait pas par où on s'arrête ! » ["Watch out, watch out, revolutions are such terrible events ! Once they have commenced, one no longer knows where one will stop!"] (Rémusat, 18). The story of « revolution » in the modern sense is thus indebted to metaphors of nature (*restoration*, *origin*, *irresistible*) without being limited to them (*violent opening up*, *novelty)*. As inherently uncontrollable, unpredictable events, repetition and historical exemplar were, as several commentators noted, largely unable to describe the winding, accelerating course that modern revolutions had come to have[280].

Even if it was never quite articulated in these precise terms, the writings of Haitian intellectuals nevertheless betrayed the conceptual tension at the heart of "revolution." In his late nineteenth-century francophilic survey of Western political history, *Théoriciens au pouvoir* (1870), Demesvar Delorme sought to demonstrate that societies functioned at their best when they were led not by tyrants who derived their power from force, but by men of the greatest intelligence and poetic imagination working in the interests of the common good. In order to prove his point, he organized his work into three separate, but accumulating histories devoted to the political leaders of Ancient Greece, Ancient Rome, and modern France.

In his *Empire of Language* (2013), Laurent Dubreuil has shown how Delorme's European-centered history, written very much according to the disciplinary

[280] "Les événements couraient plus vite que ma plume : il survenait une révolution qui mettait toutes mes comparaisons en défaut : j'écrivais sur un vaisseau pendant une tempête, et je prétendais peindre comme des objets fixes, les rives fugitives qui passaient et s'abîmaient le long du bord ». ["Events were going by faster than my pen: a revolution had arisen that pointed out the imperfections in my comparisons: I was writing on ship during a storm, and I claimed to paint, as fixed objects, the fugitive banks that passed by and which were ruined all throughout the length of the bank."] Chateaubriand as quoted in Hartog, François. *Régimes d'historicité: Présentisme et expériences du temps*. Paris: Seuil, 2003. p. 92

demands of late nineteenth century *Weltgeschichte*, nevertheless stages the interruption of this same linear history by subaltern narratives[281]. Instantiated by a digression of the text's central dialoging characters away from this stagist history into a cave containing the vestiges of a lost Amerindian civilization, according to Dubreuil, Paul and George "reconstitute a new history that integrates the fate of the colonized and reassembles the facts in anachrony" (187). Dubreuil sees in Delorme's discussion of politics, literature, and history (including its resistant subaltern narratives), a precursor and a provisional inaugurator of postcolonial theory (constructed through interpretation in our present and not inherent to Delorme). My reading of Delorme, while sympathetic to Dubreuil's, highlights, not the interruptions of a stagist linear history by anachronous, subaltern narratives but, limited largely to the portraits of his linear history, the tension between the iterability of the past and the narrative of progress undergirding the history.

Delorme was not, however, acting in a political vacuum; indeed, the obvious implicit purpose behind this overview was to suggest that, given the historical exemplars of political success, Haiti had ready-made models to follow in order to overcome the political upheavals which characterized its political climate in the nineteenth-century[282]. But such a view is only possible if historical time is in some sense bounded rather than open, structurally immutable rather than continuously

[281] Dubreuil, Laurent. "Another History of Postcolonial Critique." *The Empire of Language: Toward a Critique of (Post)colonial Expression.* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013. pp. 184-9.

[282] « Between 1843 and 1889, there were twelve presidents and nearly as many constitutions; eight in all, along with several constitutional amendments. Almost always, the changes in government came as the result of a military campaign in which the president was ousted by a rebel at the head of a regional army." Dubois, Laurent. *Haiti: The Aftershocks of History.* New York : Metropolitan Books, 2012. P. 168.

accelerating towards something unknowable; in other words, if we are under the reign of the regime of the Historia Magistra [283] where "revolution" means *return* or *restoration*. Just as observations of celestial objects led to the discovery of the laws which governed their cyclical motion, so too did Delorme hope to use historical details as the observable phenomena which would trace the motion of *universal* political processes in his positivist-inflected recycling of the *Historia Magistra*. "Si la politique est une science et non une routine, c'est par les procédés scientifiques qu'il faut la traiter. Or, pas de science sans l'observation qui donne la loi ; sans la méthode qui trace la loi ; ici, l'observation c'est l'histoire, et la méthode c'est l'expérience » ["If politics are a science and not a routine, it is by scientific processes that they must be understood. Yet there can be no science without the observation that leads to the law; without the method which traces out the law; here, that observation is History, and the method is experience"] (Delorme, 113). If humans were essentially unchanging beings embedded in the natural world, a world whose mechanical properties could be understood and described in quantifiable, mathematical language, why then should human history not be describable in similar, algebraic terms? "En effet, l'histoire est semblable aux mathématiques. Avec tels ou tels facteurs donnés, on arrive à une conséquence infaillible et forcée, et jamais à telle ou telle autre » ["Precisely, History

[283] « *Je ne te promettais pas une idée neuve*. J'ai simplement entrepris de chercher avec toi si le meilleur des gouvernements n'est pas celui de l'intelligence. Et puisque je tâche de te démontrer que c'était le système de Périclès, je ne pouvais avoir l'idée de créer une doctrine déjà vieille de deux mille ans. *Il n'y a rien de nouveau sous le soleil. Le mot est parfaitement juste* ». ["I *didn't promise you a new idea.* I've simply set out with you to determine if the best possible government isn't the one of the most intelligence. And since I am trying to show you that it was Pericles' system, I couldn't have had the idea of creating a doctrine that is already two thousand years old. *There is nothing new under the sun. That is precisely the right term.*"] Delorme, p. 31.

is similar to mathematics. Given one factor or another, one arrives at an infallible and forced consequence, and never such and such another"] (425).

At odds with the entire logic of historical self-similarity and iterability in Delorme's work is the contamination introduced across the entire conceptual field by the notion of "progress." Indeed, while I find Dubreuil's reading of the Delormian cave convincing, I should note that the tripartite structure of progressive modernity threatens to enact its revenge on the prodigious digressions when Paul and George encounter a vodou ceremony just prior to the section on Lamartine.[284] Noting that the lessons of antiquity, more than simply providing a model for the civilizations that succeed it, *continuously* and *qualitatively* improve the human species, Delorme's concept of "progress" forces diachronic societies into the uncomfortable position of *mathematical equivalence*—given the same inputs the historical outputs must be the same—and radical distinction. Due to the political, social, and moral inheritances bequeathed to them by antiquity, Delorme argues, the more recent a society is, the more enlightened it must be. "C'est un progrès sur l'antiquité. L'humanité avance chaque jour vers la lumière : chaque jour plus près, elle voit plus clair » ["It is a progress over antiquity. Each day humanity advances towards the light: each day

[284] This no doubt because vodou is taken as the sign for both a reminder of America's forgotten and marker of an incomplete historical progress. As the citation below makes clear, the peasant practitioners of vodou do get reconstituted in anachrony, only it is an anachrony that is neutralized within modernity's appeal to progress. "Ces derniers devoirs […] qui mêlent naïvement dans leurs dévotions les croyances du christianisme *aux vieilles traditions de l'Afrique et à la religion des Caraïbes.* […] Ainsi, le veaudoux [sic], à l'examiner avec attention, n'est que ce polythéisme universel que l'histoire rencontre *à la naissance de toutes les sociétés, de toutes les civilisations, de toutes les races* » [These final rites […] which naively bring together in their devotions the beliefs of Christianity *with the old traditions of Africa and the religion of the Caribs*. […] Thus, vodou, if is it examined carefully, is nothing other than the universal polytheism that history finds *at the birth of all societies, of all civilizations, of all races*."] Delorme, pp. 597, 599. Emphasis mine.

closer, it sees more clearly"] (87). Since this tension plays out at the level of the comprehension of historical time—what I have been calling a regime of historicity, after Hartog—it has clear and immediate consequences for one's perception of what constitutes "revolution," since a "revolution" can only play out in that temporal space that a regime has made available to it.

It is in light of the tension between both of these acceptations—"revolution" (*return to the point of origin*) and "revolution" (*a process opening up towards something yet unknown*)—that I would like to read the texts of Haiti's early twentieth-century. These texts, as we shall see, used one or both these meanings simultaneously as they sought to think through the continued relevance of the Haitian Revolution to the problems of early twentieth-century Haiti. Was a return to the ideals of the great Revolutionary war their ancestors had fought the remedy that was needed to end the apprehension, echoed in so many politically-engaged texts, that "progress" and "civilization" had stalled in Haiti? Or, rather, was it precisely the frequent invocation of these heroes that kept early twentieth-century Haitians from being able to see beyond the achievements—into that yet unknown—and forge a revolution that far from being a repetition, would enable them to face an occupier of an entirely different nature? How, in other words, did texts from this period articulate the shifting relationship between the concepts of "revolution" and the historical memory, the inheritance of the Haitian Revolution, itself unthinkable?

The Price of Memory: Coicou's Vision and Laleau's Choc

Even at the celebratory moment of independence, Dessalines seemed impatient at the sluggish pace of postcolonial reprisals: "Qu'attendez-vous pour apaiser leurs

mânes?" ["What exactly are you waiting for before you bring peace to the ancestors?"] he asks with a frustration requiring no didascaliae even two centuries later[285]. How could the survivors, everywhere surrounded by the tangible reminders of so much personal loss, of the disintegration of so many families, not be moved to avenge the dead? And yet it is their privileged position as inaccessible creditors that allow Dessalines' dead to invert what we have come to know as the judgment of history and *render judgments of insufficiency upon the present from the past*.[286] "Songez que vous avez voulu que vos restes reposassent auprès de ceux de vos pères, quand vous avez chassé la tyrannie ; descendrez-vous dans leurs tombes sans les avoir vengés ? Non, leurs ossements repousseraient les vôtres ». ["Know that you wanted *your remains* to rest alongside *those of your fathers*, after having chased tyranny away; would you descend into *their tombs* without *having avenged them?* No! *Their remains would be repulsed by yours*"][287] In this way, the dead of the Haitian Revolution were seen, from the very origin of the nation, as active agents of the unfinished anticolonialism that defined Haitian expressions of postcolonialism. It should thus come as no great surprise that the texts that make up the corpus of this chapter are haunted—often in a very literal sense—by the damning judgements of the Revolutionary dead. Thinking through the relationship between these dead, who, like the Amerindians in Dessalines' proclamation, may be asking the living to imitate their once heroic actions, allows us to gauge how Haitians in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century might have

[285] *Proclamation of 1804*.
[286] This is very different from our contemporary understanding of historical judgment which often imagines the disputes of the present-made-past vindicated in one way or another by the backwards looking glance of History-yet-to-be-written. The trace lingers, I would argue, in the utilization of the expression, "Rolling over in their graves."
[287] *Proclamation of 1804.*

felt about the continued relevance of the Haitian Revolution to their specific concerns. That is, it should give us insight into their relationship to concept of "revolution."

Massillon Coicou's 1892 poem, "Vision," is a perfect example of the genre. The leaders of the Haitian Revolution—whose centennial is fast-approaching—pass in front of the poem's speaker sobbing mutely to themselves. What concerns the speaker, however, is less the "undead" state in which the founding fathers reveal themselves to him—"ils étaient rayonnants, divins" ["they were radiant, divine"] [288]—than the affective transformation that has wrought these once-glorious generals. "Or les voyant si fiers, avec leurs fronts si bas, / Je compris qu'ils avaient des angoisses dans l'âme » ["Yet seeing them so proud, and with their heads so low, / I understood that they carried agony in their soul"].[289] Unable to converse with the silent spectres, the speaker nevertheless addresses them and attempts to appease their suffering by acknowledging a spirit of conscious ingratitude which he believes had come to characterize late nineteenth-century Haiti's relationship with the revolutionary past.

The primary problem, in the eyes of the speaker, was not that Haitians were unfamiliar with the principal actors or sites of their revolutionary history—on the contrary, much of the poem is spent remarking (and performing) the keen awareness of these details—but that this shared memory could not be transformed into a collective action that would keep the inheritance of the nation, the work that the founders had bequeathed to them, in life[290]. "Qu'importe / de nous enorgueillir de la

[288] Coicou, Massillon. « Vision ». *Poésies Nationales.* Port-au-Prince : Presses Nationales d'Haïti, 2005. pp. 182-5.
[289] Coicou, p. 182.
[290] « Vous étiez si contents de nous léguer un nom, un titre, une patrie ». ["You were so happy to bequeath us a name, a title, a country."] Coicou, p. 183.

Crête-à-Pierrot; / de vanter le passé ; de vanter, le front haut, / Vertières, Haut-du-Cap, la Ravine-à-Couleuvre / de bénir nos aïeux, d'aimer, d'exalter l'œuvre / que cent siècles épris exalteront encore ? / Qu'importe tout cela si notre âme s'endort / au gré des passions, si notre foi sommeille » [What does it matter / if we swell with pride at the fight of Crête-à-Pierrot ; / if we brag about the past ; brag, head held high, / about Vertières, Haut-du-Cap, la Ravine-à-Couleuvre / if we bless our ancestors, if we love and exalt their accomplishments / that one hundred centuries later will exalt ever still ? Does any of it matter if our soul slumbers / at the whim of passions, if our faith falters and sleeps"] (Coicou, 184)? It is this play between a compulsive act of memory and the total disregard for the sacrifices suffered in the name of the homeland-to-be that characterizes the ingratitude that the speaker traces throughout the poem. Though forces external to Haiti are presented as a threat—if only to a sense of national pride rather than sovereignty—nothing in the poem appears to threaten the continued existence of the nation (*as a transferable inheritance to posterity*) more than social division and senseless political quarrels. "Et la voilà pourtant, votre œuvre!...la voilà! / Sous *nos coups*, chaque jour, incomprise, meurtrie! / […] / Ce drapeau/ qui vit nos rédempteurs animer leurs pensées / sublimes, …et qui voit *nos guerres insensées* » [And look at it now, all of your work !...Look at it ! / Everyday, by *our blows*, misunderstood, battered ! / […] / This flag / that saw our redeemers bring life to thoughts / so sublime, …and which sees *our senseless wars*"] (Emphasis mine ; 183, 184). We shall later return to Coicou's « guerres insensées », because, as the periphrasis for "civil war," it is the polar opposite of "revolution" (*as novel opening*),

and is precisely the right term for indicating political violence that is cyclical and futile[291].

In the end, the speaker acknowledges that the best way to honor the distressed spectres might be, paradoxically, to not honor them. By placing less of an emphasis on history (*as decidedly past events*), his contemporaries could begin to put Haiti on the path towards a racially-specific civilizing mission. "Non, le tout, ce n'est pas de bénir nos ancêtres / […] / Mais c'est de nous unir sous le regard de Dieu, / d'aimer le Travail, de chercher la lumière / […] / Pour faire évoluer notre race avec nous » [No, the most important thing isn't to cherish our ancestors / […] / But rather to unite ourselves under the grace of God, / to love work, to seek out the light, / […] / So that our race might evolve alongside us"] (185). Like so many Haitian texts which conclude with a prophetic, if unspecific, vision of the future, ultimately the "vision" to which the title refers might not be that of the ghosts of the Revolution haunting the speaker after all, but his reassuring foresight of the day when the problems of Haiti will have at last been resolved. Could Haiti's next revolution, then, begin only once the *Haitian Revolution* had been forgotten?

Léon Laleau's occupation-era, *Le choc: chronique haïtienne des années 1915-1918* (1932), demonstrates that several decades later Haitians were still thinking through the problem of how best to honor the memory of their revolutionary dead while simultaneously living in the open-future that the revolution should have made

[291] "De bien de points de vue, la guerre civile prend dès lors le sens d'un phénomène absurde et sans débouché, face auquel la révolution est au contraire capable de définir un nouvel horizon » ["In many respects, from then on the term civil war takes on the meaning of an absurd phenomenon without a clear end opposite which the term revolution is, on the other hand, capable of defining a new horizon."] Koselleck, p. 69.

available to them. In the first part of the novel, largely devoted to a series of conversations between the foreign-born, Savoyard priest and the young protagonist, Maurice Desroches, the priest explicitly articulates the relationship between what I have called the compulsive act of memory and the peril in which it placed their national inheritance.

> Vos aïeux ? Eh bien quoi, ils ont fait une nation. Leur œuvre est finie. Vous devez, vous, la faire vivre, cette œuvre, la parachever pour qu'elle soit de plus en plus digne de l'acte qui en a été le premier chapitre. *La meilleure façon à mon sens, de vous hausser à la taille de votre destinée, de votre ascendance, et de reconnaître la gloire des héros dont les gestes empourprent les premières pages de votre Histoire, c'est de vous respecter d'abord et de respecter ensuite votre Pays*. Votre devise, à propos de vos ancêtres c'est : « Parlons-en toujours, mais n'y pensons jamais. ». Elle aurait dû être : « Pensons-y toujours, mais parlons-en beaucoup moins.[292]
>
> [Your ancestors? And what, they built a nation. Their work is done. You, on the other hand, your task is to bring this work to life, to finish it so that it might be ever more worthy of the act that was its opening chapter. *The best way of doing this, as I see it, is to raise yourselves to the height of your destiny, to the height of those that came before you, and to recognize the glory of the heroes whose actions ennoble the first pages of your history; do this by respecting yourselves first, and thereafter respecting your country.* Your motto, as regards your ancestors, is: "Let us always speak of them, but let us never think of them." It should have been: "Let us think of them always, but let us speak of them much less.]

As in Coicou's "Vision," the best way to honor the heroes of the revolution is to short-circuit the discursive character of acts of reminiscence. A cult of the ancestors formed around individual mental manifestations of loss cannot coalesce into a fossilized politics ceaselessly, and perhaps insincerely, repeating the exploits of the revolutionary dead. To the extent that the silence of the living serves as the gauge of their commitment to keeping the inheritance of the nation in life—"vous devez, vous, la faire vivre"—and allows the living to attend to their affirmations of self and

[292] Laleau, Léon. *Le choc : chronique haïtienne des années 1915-1918.* Port-au-Prince : Editions de l'an 2000, Imprimerie Centrale, 1975. p. 27. Emphasis mine.

country, they quietly honor the work of the dead that preceded them. Or so Father Ganet would have us believe.

For Arendt, the problem of beginning was self-evidently related to the question of "revolution."[293] The connection, especially in the case of the modern sense of "revolution," appears immediate and uncontroversial. However, it does little to address the more intractable problem of *beginning(s)* when "revolution," seeking to recalibrate the calendar, sets to bring one revolutionary epoch to an end and found another. This is the question, I believe, that several Haitian intellectuals attempted to resolve in their literary reflections. This is, in other words, how I argue that we should read the anxiety surrounding the "proper" way to mourn the revolutionary dead: the "first" origin whose historical example could do little to address the problems of a Haiti perceived to have stalled in History. If Coicou's speaker concluded that the revolutionary spectres could be calmed, in some way, by being forgotten, Josilus, with whom I began this introduction, argued that he and his followers were bringing about "une révolution justement pour *enterrer le passé*" ["precisely a revolution that would *bury the past*"] (Emphasis mine, Marcelin, 157). It is perhaps thus not a coincidence that during this period when the relationship of the dead to revolution was being explicitly debated, that a mausoleum was erected to honor the (dismembered) remains of Dessalines[294] (1892), and even later, the first public festival held to commemorate Toussaint[295] (1924).

[293] Arendt, p. 10.

[294] "Il était réservé au général Hyppolite, Président de la République, cette grande gloire d'élever, le premier, un monument à Dessalines. On travaille activement à l'œuvre [1892] qui sera éminemment grandiose ». ["To the General Hyppolite, President of the Republic, was reserved the great glory of

Laurent Dubois has suggested that the Haitian Revolution "was a war over the meaning of 'revolution' itself"[296]. And to the extent that Haiti has, until relatively recently, largely been excluded from discussions of late eighteenth-century revolutions, he is right. Not only does Arendt limit her analysis to the American and French Revolutions, implying, of course, that what occurred in Haiti was not legible as a "revolution," but Koselleck, who actually does refer to Haiti in his interrogation of 'emancipation,' so distorts the historical record that the founding Revolution is seen as nothing more than a "racially and economically motivated *civil war*" and Napoleon—the same Napoleon that sought to secretly re-enslave the freed French of Saint-Domingue—emerges as a hero[297]. It is thus hardly surprising, although nevertheless disheartening, to read in *Imagined Communities* that Benedict Anderson refers to the Haitian Revolution as "Toussaint Louverture's *insurrection*" (Anderson, 192).[298] Dubois saw in the burning cane fields, asymmetric warfare, and the late-eighteenth

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being the first to erect a monument to Dessalines. Work is underway now [1892] and it shall be immanently grandiose"] Footnote to « Sa Tombe », Coicou, p. 82.

[295] « La première manifestation publique de reconnaissance envers Toussaint Louverture eut lieu le 9 juillet 1924, au Haut-du-Cap. Sur l'initiative de M. Lhérisson, de Port-au-Prince, où l'on était convenu d'organiser une fête commémorative touchant l'illustre ancêtre ». ["The first public expression of gratitude towards Toussaint Louverture took place July 9th, 1924 in Haut-du-Cap. Inspired by the initiative of Mr. Lhérisson, of Port-au-Prince, where it had been agreed that a commemorative celebration would be organized to honor the illustrious ancestor."] Leconte, Vergniaud. *Henri Christophe dans l'histoire d'Haïti.* Paris : Editions Berger-Levrault, 1931. p. 164.

[296] Dubois, Laurent. *Avengers of the New World: The Story of the Haitian Revolution*. Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of University Harvard Press, 2004. p. 77

[297] "As the first black-ruled colony, French Haiti put into effect, with help from the Jacobins in the motherland, its own sovereign and human rights under Toussaint L'ouverture. He was genuinely imbued with revolutionary ideals, and their realization cost the lives of 95 percent of the former white planters there. *A racially and economically motivated civil war erupted, a war of settling accounts and revenge*, which only came to an end with the help of Napoleon and Britain, but the horror continued much longer." Koselleck, Reinhart. Trans. Todd Samuel Presner et al. *The practice of conceptual history: Timing History, Spacing Concepts.* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002. p. 258. Emphasis mine. It is especially important to read Koselleck against himself here; as I have already noted, in the modern era of 'revolution," "civil war" is not a neutral term. See footnote 22.

[298] Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism.* London: Verso, 1991. p. 192. Emphasis mine.

century interrogation of the universality of rights, not the historical dead-ends implicit in the concepts of *insurrection* and *civil war*, but, like Liancourt before him, a change world-historical in nature, whose irresistibility only the word "revolution" could ever hope to convey.

Yet aside from the debates that were taking place beyond Haiti's shores, Haitians in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century continued to interrogate the tense conceptual ground underlying "revolution" that they had inherited from their founding. After all, the nation had been founded along the lines ***both*** of an imagined *restoration* ("Haiti"[299]) and a *novel* understanding of radical antislavery unheard of and, according to Fischer, largely disavowed from Eurocentric accounts of 'revolution' and 'modernity.'[300] In a sense, I have already begun this work; the last chapter's analyses of the literature of Amerindian inspiration can be read as an attempt to provide the historical antecedents that would make felicitous the fantasy of Black Haitian redemption and restoration. In this chapter, however, I am concerned with literature of a similar time period that instead explicitly sought to conceptualize "revolution," through the Haitian Revolution and its dead. In a late nineteenth century where the external benchmarks of "progress" and "civilization" seemed ever-deferred, intellectuals, as we shall see, alternately relied on one or both connotations of "revolution," in their attempts to question the continued relevance of

[299] « Le 1er janvier 1804, réunis en fédération armée sur la place de la ville de Gonaïves, ils proclamèrent solennellement leur indépendance et redonnèrent à leur pays le nom aborigène d'Haïti ». ["January 1st, 1804, gathered together in an armed federation on the plaza of the city of Gonaïves, they solemnly proclaimed their independence and restored to their country the aboriginal name of Haiti."] Janvier, Louis Joseph. *Les Constitutions d'Haïti*. Paris : C. Marpon et E. Flammarion, 1886. p. 28.

[300] Fischer, Sibylle. *Modernity Disavowed : Haiti and the Cultures of Slavery in the Age of Revolution.* Durham: Duke University Press, 2004. p. 24.

the Haitian Revolution for problems that could not always be recast into the Dessalinian language of postcolonial anticolonialism. Furthermore, I will argue that though several critiques of the past were useful in diagnosing the dangers of this crisis in time, they failed to generate new discourses with which Haitians could collectively imagine the future that a revolution might make possible. It is thus not an accident, I would argue, neither that Coicou's "Vision" ends the moment that the future tense is invoked nor that, even when addressing the future, it can only do so in comforting generalities. ("Où nous aurons la paix, le travail, l'amour") [("When will at last have peace, work, and love")].

I: La Révolution est morte, Vive la Révolution **:** *La Vengeance de Mama* **(1902)**

On approchait du Centenaire. L'épopée historique qui avait illuminé l'aurore d'un siècle, qui, du volcan de lave rouge qui fut notre Révolution, cracha la liberté d'un peuple et promit le rachat d'une race, après un long oubli, revenait à la mode.[301]

[The centennial was approaching. The historical epic that had illuminated the aurora of a century, that, from the volcano of red lava that was our Revolution, spit out the liberty of a people and promised the redemption of a race, after being forgotten, was fashionable once more.]

Haitian literary production in the early twentieth century was marked by a decidedly split personality. On the one hand, hoping to make of Haiti a "cultural province" of France, with whom, they claimed, it shared a rich, intellectual tradition, adherents to Justin Lhérisson's newly formed literary journal, *La Ronde* (1898) sought to address universal, eternal themes in their works. In this way, they hoped to make of Haiti a Caribbean dependency of metropolitan French tastes.[302] On the other hand, this francophilic gesture towards the "universal" was undercut, for many of the same

[301] Marcelin, Frédéric. *Autour de deux romans.* 2e édition. Port-au-Prince : Editions Fardin, 1984. pp. 13-14.
[302] Laroche, Maximilien. *Haïti et sa littérature.* A.G.E.U.M., 1963. p.72.

intellectuals, by the desire to produce a literature that spoke to the specificity—in language, in manners, in history—of Haitian lived experiences.[303] Unlike nineteenth-century Haitian literary minds such as Demesvar Delorme, whose writings were only 'Haitian' by the contingent nationality of their authors, what was needed, Jean Price-Mars later suggested in his indigenist take on the "couleur locale" tendency, was "une certaine sensibilité commune à la race, voire un certain tour de langue, une certaine conception de la vie propre à notre pays" ["a certain sensibility common to the race, even, a certain way with words, a certain understanding of life proper to our country"] (Price-Mars, 206).[304]

In light of this division, Frédéric Marcelin, the founding father of novels in the so-called 'Haitian tradition', found himself in a deeply uncomfortable position[305]. Refusing the call of francophilia parading as universalism, his first two novels, published in 1901 and 1902 respectively, were explicit reflections on the political and social reforms that were needed to change Haiti's historical course in light of the approaching centennial. Indeed, given his stated belief in the exceptionalism of Haiti's socio-historical situation, it is difficult to understand how anyone could read his criticism within the comparative politics of a theorist such as Delorme.[306] Unlike the late nineteenth-century poet, Oswald Durand, whose poetry is often praised as

[303] Fouché, Franck. *Guide pour l'étude de la littérature haïtienne*. Port-au-Prince, Haïti :Editions Panorama, 1964. pp. 82-85.
[304] Price-Mars, Jean. *Ainsi parla l'oncle suivi de Révister l'oncle*. Montréal, Québec : Editions Mémoire d'encrier, 2009. p. 205-6.
[305] Jonassaint, Jean. *Des romans de tradition haïtienne : sur un récit tragique.* Paris : L'Harmattan, 2002. p. 59.
[306] "Nous avons, grâce à des causes multiples, un état social bien original. Il n'est pas séduisant ; il est orignal cependant ». ["For multiple reasons we have a rather unique society. It is not seductive, but it is nevertheless unique."] Marcelin, *Autour de deux romans*, p. 10.

providing a precursor to the aesthetic of "couleur locale" by highlighting several aspects of rural, peasant life—kreyòl ("Choucoune"), indigenous standards of female beauty ("Nos Payses"), and vodou spirituality ("Sur le morne lointain")[307]—in these two novels, Marcelin largely wants to portray the everyday reality of corruption that had come to define urban, political life. Responding to critics who derided the aesthetic as vulgar and unserious, Marcelin called for a photographic realism that would capture not only the easily digestible virtues of his compatriots, but the vices which were the cause of so many problems as well (Marcelin, 5-6). Their primary moral failing, according to Marcelin, will sound resounding familiar after our reading of Coicou and Laleau.

> Au premier rang, les dominant toutes, dans la section des causes morales, il faut placer notre indifférence, mieux que cela, notre mépris, notre ingratitude pour les héros de notre indépendance. *Nous les avons, de tous temps, accablés de ce qualificatif, superbe. Cela suffisait à notre vanité, mais nous n'avons jamais eu leur culte dans le cœur.* […] Une nation qui n'a pas le culte de son histoire, le culte de ses morts, n'a pas le droit de se vanter de son âme, d'en faire parade…--Des mots, des mots, comme dit Hamlet.[308]
>
> [At the top, above all others, in the area of moral causes, we must place our collective indifference, our disdain, rather, our ingratitude for the heroes of our independence. *We have always struck them with the qualifier, superb. That sufficed for our vanity, but we have never honored them in our hearts.* […] A country that does not honor its history, that does not honor its dead, does not have the right to brag about its soul, to go around parading…--Words, words, words, as Hamlet said.]

Once again Haitians are confronted with the spectre of ingratitude constituted by a simultaneous excess and failure of mourning and memory. Beyond their superficial and self-interested attachment to the revolutionary heroes, Marcelin critiques the way in which the endless repetition of readymade, nationalist slogans proliferate through time and space, constituting not so much an act of memory, but its

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[307] Durand, Oswald. *Poésies choisies.* Ed. Pradel Pompilus. Port-au-Prince : Imprimerie des Antilles, 1964. « Choucoune », pp. 49-50 ; « Nos Payses », pp. 45-6 ; « Sur le morne lointain », pp. 43-5.

[308] Marcelin, *Autour de deux romans.* 2e édition. Port-au-Prince : Editions Fardin, 1984. pp. 110-1, 119. Emphasis mine.

very erasure, and prompting an emotional divestment made visible in the manifest failure of mourning. ("Nous n'avons jamais eu leur culte dans le coeur.") [("We have never honored them in our hearts.")]

That Marcelin would have Shakespeare's most emblematic figure of vengeance and loss, Hamlet, on the tip of the pen in describing the tragedy of pervasive national indifference is perhaps not altogether surprising. After all, among the novels defended in his *Autour de deux romans* (1903), a response to the charges of anti-patriotism in his work, was *La Vengeance de Mama* (1902); in short, the tale of a 'widow' seeking to exact murderous revenge upon the man who killed her fiancé. But let us take a step back. Though comprehensible as a standalone critique of fin-de-siècle Haitian political society, through various textual cues the reader is encouraged to take *La vengeance de mama* itself as the sequel to Marcelin's earlier *Thémistocle-Epaminondas Labasterre* (1901). The central problematic of both texts, as the reader may have imagined, is "revolution." *Labasterre* serves as the tragic *Bildungsroman* for the young, optimistic, and excessively naïve eponymous character who attempts to "regenerate" the country through his political writings and acts. At the end of the novel, however, Labasterre falls prey to the machinations of his once ally, the duplicitous Télémaque, who, having been brought into power by his own insincere pretenses to 'revolution,' has him shot dead. In this *Labasterre* takes on the anxiety surrounding insincere performances of historical recollection and the dangerous ways in which they could be motivated to political ends. Set three years after the assassination of Labasterre, *Vengeance*, focuses instead on an interrogation of the

ways in which survivors can mourn the dead of 'revolution' with a sincerity that is politically useful.

Before proceeding with our analysis of the varied political and personal reactions to the loss of Labasterre, however, it may be useful to provide a brief overview of the relevant events of the novel. *La vengeance de mama* is set in the politically coercive world that Labasterre's reforms were never able to prevent. In this world power is concentrated in the hands of the manipulative orator Télémaque, Labasterre's one-time ally turned rival, who, having been promoted to position of Secretary of State, now wields substantial power over the actions of the legislature, the press, and, through a relentless campaign of intimidation, private citizens. Importantly, Labasterre is survived by his fiancée Zulma—the eponymous "mama"—who, overcome with equal parts grief and wrath at the idea that the man she loved appears to have died in vain, hatches an assassination plot of her own. The novel, then, traces out at once the moment when the organized, but previously covert, resistance to Télémaque's regime, itself carried out in Labasterre's name, finally culminates in a revolution *and* Zulma's explicitly personal quest to end Télémaque's life.

Josilus: Declarations of Historical Independence

Given the reading I am proposing, it is perhaps not surprising that the novel begins with a wake. Aside from establishing an important parallelism between the novel's central grieving characters—the aforementioned Zulma and a M. Josilus Jean-Charles—the ceremony being held for Josilus' parents also serves to establish the

quasi-didactic moral authority that Josilus commands within his local community despite widespread political corruption. Testifying to that effect via narratorial transcription, one character will go so far as to note that, "M. Josilus Jean-Charles réalisait le type absolu de la perfection humaine" ["Mr. Josilus Jean-Charles was nothing short of the realization of human perfection"] (Marcelin, 13). In fact, to the extent that the wake, as public gathering, underscored and foreshadowed the integral role that Josilus played within the community, (even in a moment of deeply personal loss), it similarly allowed guests to witness something of Josilus' political savvy and clout in dealing with the government's panoptical regime of intimidation when Télémaque makes a sudden and unexpected entrance. If there were one person who could take over the project of political reform for which the young Labasterre had been shot down, the novel suggests from its very first pages, it could be none other than Josilus. It is thus unsurprising to learn that not only is Josilus actively involved in the planning of a cautious campaign of revolutionary upheaval, but that he is indeed its leader. Since our interest lies in interrogating the potential and limitations of circulating the discourses of "revolution," in general and the "Haitian Revolution," in particular, the question remains: just what kind of "revolution" was the redemptive Josilus after? The answer, as I'll demonstrate, largely depends on where you stand in Haitian society.

It is fair to say, for reasons I shall return to momentarily, that the revolution that Josilus sought to bring about was not "Dessalinian" in character. Nor does it seek, unlike so many nationalist representations, to institute an analeptic *return* to the mythic moment just following Independence, singular and no-doubt retroactively

constructed, during which the projects of radical antislavery and anticolonialism could still suffice to hold back the tide of race and class antagonisms disavowed in the alliance of Dessalines and Pétion. Despite this, however, I would argue that even in distancing itself from earlier revolutionary language that would be transparently legible as belonging to the former Emperor, its trace remains, and that for as much as Josilus would like to transcend Dessalines, in many ways, he remains bound by the discursive parameters he established. This tension is made readily visible by Adhémar, Josilus' son, as his discusses the meaning that youth have inscribed upon his father's revolutionary aims.

> Toute la jeunesse, père, est d'accord: on ne renverse pas une tyrannie pour en ériger une autre. Notre ami est mort pour la liberté de la Presse, pour la liberté de réunion, pour la liberté du suffrage universel.....Nous n'apaiserons son sang, que nous avons juré de venger, que par la conquête et l'application de tous ces biens.... Comment le pourrions-nous avec le système militaire qui est le régime de l'obéissance passive, s'exerçant au-dessus de tous les actes de la vie civile?[309]
>
> [Father, all of the youth are in agreement: one does not overthrow one tyranny only to institute another. Our friend died for freedom of the press, for freedom of assembly, for the freedom of universal suffrage…We will not appease his blood, that we have sworn to avenge, but by the conquest and the application of these freedoms…And how could we with the military system that is the regime of passive obedience, reigning over all of the actions of civil life?]

At first glance, there appears to be little reason to read the *reason-for-dying* that Adhémar inscribes on the dead Labasterre as Dessalinian. As political demands, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, and the right to universal suffrage partake more of the founding logic of constitutional liberalism in the American sense, than Dessalinian postcolonialism. Indeed, what we would recognize as the principles of the separation of Church and State (Art. 50), the right to property (Art. 6), the right to a fair trial (DG, Art. 5), and protection from unreasonable search and seizure (DG, Art.

[309] Marcelin, *La Vengeance de Mama*, p. 57.

6), are scattered all throughout the Imperial Constitution of 1805, with the latter two tossed into a enumeration of general, catch-all dispositions ranging from the establishment of the national colors (DG, Art. 20), to the rights of children born out of wedlock (DG, Art. 16)[310]. When taken together, the placement of each of these Imperial protections, which to us appears so irregular, and the absence of an explicit appeal to the discourse of "rights,[311]" suggest that these disparate protections were not conceived along the lines of a coherent unity of elements that can be logically conjoined as Adhémar succeeds in doing in the citation above. ("Pour la liberté de la Presse, pour la liberté de réunion, pour la liberté du suffrage universel ») [("For the freedom of the press, for the freedom of assembly, for the freedom of universal suffrage")].

Yet, Adhémar's link between the eradication of tyranny and vengeance, as the means by which one is accepted by the dead, is Dessalinian through and through. Compare, for example, Adhémar's—"Nous n'apaiserons son sang, *que nous avons juré de venger*, que par la conquête et l'application de tous ces biens » ["We will not appease his blood, *that we have sworn to avenge*, but by the conquest and the application of these freedoms"] (Emphasis mine, 57) —to Dessalines' : « Songez que

[310] Art. 50 : « La loi n'admet pas de religion dominante. » ["The law does not recognize any dominant religion. "] ; Art. 6 : « La propriété est sacrée, sa violation sera rigoureusement poursuivie. » ["Property is sacred, its violation will be rigorously prosecuted"] ; DG, Art. 5 : « Nul ne pourra être jugé sans avoir été légalement entendu. » ["No one may be judged without trial"] ; DG, Art. 6 : «La maison de tout citoyen est un asile inviolable. ». ["The home of each citizen is an inviolable refuge. "] Janvier, *Les Constitutions d'Haïti*, pp. 29-41.

[311] I am referring here to the fact that the protections referenced in the previous footnote appear as the performative speech acts of a sovereign will rather than the constantive recognition of rights originating within citizens. An explicit, if still dissimilar, appeal to the language of rights will not arise until the post-Dessalinian Constitution of 1806. Article 3: "Les droits de l'homme en société sont: la liberté, l'égalité, la sûreté, la propriété ». ["The rights of men in society are: freedom, equality, safety in their person, and property."] Janvier, p. 49.

vous avez voulu que vos restes reposassent auprès de ceux de vos pères quand vous avez chassé la tyrannie. Descendrez-vous dans leurs tombes sans les avoir vengés ? Non ! leurs ossements repousseraient les vôtres. ["Know that you wanted *your remains* to rest alongside *those of your fathers*, after having chased tyranny away; would you descend into *their tombs* without *having avenged them?* No! *Their remains would be repulsed by yours.*"] [312] That said, if in realizing the pact of monumentalization Adhémar borrowed from the bellicose language of vengeance, it's clear that the "vengeance" he seeks in this case isn't the death of those who killed Labasterre—as it would have been for Dessalines—but rather the establishment of these liberal rights which Labasterre himself died trying to bring about. And, whereas for Dessalines, the military had played an understandably important role in the Haitian fight against tyranny—"ces généraux qui ont guidé vos efforts contre la tyrannie" ["these generals which have guided your efforts against tyranny"] [313]—Adhémar believes, as the larger citation above makes clear, that it is the military itself which impedes the implementation of a proper civilian government.

If I am correct in suspecting that inherent to Josilus' revolutionary impulse was the tension between what he considered the outdated discourses of the past, and the demands of the present, then part of the desire to form a new origin has to be an implicit disavowal of its antecedents. Early on in the novel, the narrator, in establishing the link between Josilus' movement and the dead Labasterre, makes the following observation: "Ils firent de lui [*Labasterre*] le drapeau, le représentant d'une idée noble, grande, à laquelle ils habituèrent leurs timidités : celle de la lutte à

[312] *Proclamation de 1804.*
[313] *Proclamation de 1804*.

outrance contre la tyrannie » ["They made of him [*Labasterre*] their flag, the emblem of a great and noble idea to which they had accustomed their timid spirits: that of stubbornly fighting off tyranny"] (46). In our analysis of the novel *Stella*, we have already seen the process of transforming the dead into the banner for an imagined community at work. If we recall briefly, in that novel, the red band of the revolutionary flag was the tattered, blood-soaked dress of Marie the African, whose sons, one black, one mulatto, had joined hands to exact revenge on the white planter that killed their mother. More generally, to the extent that the real Haitian flag was born in the fires of revolution as a real-time commentary of its anticolonial, antislavery aims, any reconfiguration of the notion of the "Haitian flag" has an immediate consequence upon the spirit of revolution and the community for whom it speaks[314]. While Dessalines and Josilus both sought to justify their revolutions as the struggle against "tyranny," Josilus/Labasterre's struggle against domestic political excess and for the respect of the letter of constitutional law[315], are difficult, if not impossible, to articulate within the Dessalinian phraseology of anticolonial as antislavery resistance which had for so long, as we have seen, formed the basis of revolutionary discourse. That is, Josilus' revolution appears to be borrowing

[314] "Mais néanmoins, dans la circonstance dont il s'agit, Pétion sentit la nécessité urgente de l'adoption d'un drapeau qui fût un signe de ralliement pour les indigènes, et distinct de celui des Français : c'était au général en chef à le choisir, à l'ordonner aux officiers généraux. […] Dessalines prescrivit alors de retrancher la couleur *blanche* du drapeau dont on se servait : le drapeau *indigène* devint bicolore, bleu et rouge ». ["But nevertheless, in the circumstances that we are speaking off, Petion felt the urgent need to adopt a flag that would be a rallying sign for the Indigenes, and distinct from that of the French: it was up to the General in Chief to choose it, to impose it upon the general officers. […] Dessalines thus prescribed that the color *white* of the flag that they were using should be taken out: the flag of the Indigenes became bi-colored, blue and red."] Ardouin, Beaubrun. *Etudes sur l'histoire d'Haïti suivi de la vie du général J.M. Borgella*. Vol. 2. Tome 5. Port-au-Prince : Editions Fardin, 2005. p. 84.

[315] « Un jeune homme fusillé pour avoir crié : Vive la Constitution ». ["A young man was shot to death for having shouted : Long live the constitution."] Marcelin, *La Vengeance de Mama*, p. 43.

Dessalines' characteristic anathema—inserted into the Proclamation the mention "celle de la lutte à outrance contre la tyrannie" ["that of the stubbornly fighting off tyranny"] would go unnoticed—but not its targets. No external political enemy is ever identified onto which the threat of (political) servitude might be affixed. In short, for as many meanings as "aya bombé" (and its variations) might have been taken to hold, Labasterre's dying "Vive la Constitution!" could not be one of them. Josilus' Revolution, then, as the imagining of a new slogan and symbol of national belonging suggests—"ils firent de lui le drapeau" ["they made of him the flag"]—was seeking to create radically new possibilities for the nearly hundred year-old nation. (Even if, as I am arguing, the Dessalinian trace is never far.)

> *Ils méditèrent, comme couronnement, une révolution qui serait la vraie, la dernière, la transformation radicale de nos vieilles, absurdes institutions décrépites, non un simple trompe-l'œil, un changement de personne.* Obligés de se taire, ils se replièrent sur eux-mêmes. Ils haïrent la phrase d'où l'idée était absente. *Ils rêvèrent de programmes autrement que sur du papier et pour l'ébahissement des badauds.* Leur esprit s'ouvrit, comme si un éclair illuminait soudainement leur cerveau, à la contemplation précise, rigoureuse de la Vérité.[316]
>
> [*As a crowning achievement, they reflected upon a revolution which would be true, the last, the radical transformation of our old, absurd and decrepit institutions, and not a simple trompe-l'oeil, as in a simple change of person.* Required to keep their silence, they withdrew among themselves. They hated sentences which expressed no thoughts. *They dreamed of programs that would live beyond the paper they were written on and which served no purpose but the astonishment of onlookers.* Their minds opened up, as if a lightning bolt had suddenly lit up their brains, in the rigorous and precise contemplation of the Truth.]

At the heart of the narrator's reflections on the revolution that Josilus and his followers were attempting to bring about were two damning critiques. The primary problem, he suggests, was that there had been a general failure to reinvent the Haitian political structures that, by the end of the nineteenth century, were marked by institutional senescence and decrepitude. Presenting these institutions as largely

[316] Marcelin, *La vengeance de* Mama, p. 47.

incompatible with the concerns of modern governance, the narrator gives no indication that what is needed is *a return*, or *a restoration* of these institutions to a form they might once have had, which would have suggested an inherent, internal legitimacy that was later lost to decadence. Indeed, it is because the institutional core of the Haitian political sphere had been reduced to shambles, with one leader after the other fighting for the right to occupy the corrupted ruins, that these nominal shifts in leadership, these "palace revolutions,[317]" are insufficient to effectuating true political change. Instead, under the banner of "revolution," the narrator calls for the complete transformation of these political structures into something altogether new. In other words, what had been circulating as "revolution" for so long throughout nineteenth-century Haiti's iterative relationship with the concept revealed itself to be little more than a counterfeit. Beyond its deceptive optics ("trompe l'oeil"), theatrics ("pour l'ébahissement des badauds ») (["the astonishment of onlookers"]) and empty speech[318] (« la phrase où l'idée était absente ») (["sentences which expressed no thoughts"]), there must be not only a true revolution ("la vraie"), but one that will put

[317] "Coups d'état and palace revolutions, where power changes hands from one man to another, from one clique to another, depending on the form of government in which the coup d'état occurs, have been less feared because the change they bring about is circumscribed to the sphere of government and carries a minimum of unquiet to the people at large." Arendt, p. 27.

[318] The dangerous (ab)use of Haitian Revolutionary history as a politically potent parlure, as Dubreuil has used the term, has been addressed in several texts, as "Vision" makes clear. That it remained a concern throughout the period I am addressing in this chapter is perhaps best illustrated by a brief scene from Jacques Romain's *Fantoches* (1931). Commenting on the odds that the public will favor one of two politicians at a debate, the astute Santiague notes: "Comment voulez-vous exposer à cette foule et la froide logique qui conviennent à un programme politique ? Lefèvre perdra la partie parce que son adversaire, en guise d'arguments, fera appel aux mânes des ancêtres : Christophe, Toussaint, Dessalines—la rengaine connue—et remplacera les idées par les trémolos lyriques de diseur de café concert.» ["How could you ever hope to express the cold logic befitting a political program to this crowd ? Lefèvre will lose this match because his opponent, instead of arguments, will make appeals to the spirits of the ancestors : Christophe, Toussaint, Dessalines—that old tune—and will replace ideas with the lyrical quavers of a speaker of a concert café."] Roumain, Jacques. *Fantoches.* Collection Indigène, 1931. [Reproduit, Ateliers Fardin, 1977]. p. 31.

an end, once and for all, to the cyclical hold of "revolution" in Haitian history: "la dernière" (["the last"]).

And yet there is something unsettling about the narrator's epistemological assumptions of "revolution." That is, he speaks of the coming revolution in historical terms that most map onto the logic of Christian eschatology. If, in the Christian regime of history, the return of Christ signaled the end of history's significant events, beyond which humanity had only wait out for the final judgment in the ultimately eventless passage of ever-repeating self-similar time, by definition nothing 'new' could arise. The realization that Josilus' revolution would be "the last" underscores not only an epistemological hold over the future that is incompatible with the modern, open-ended, unpredictable revolutions of modernity [319] but risks leading to a disengagement with the future after the revolution is completed. That this might indeed be the case is strongly suggested by the temporal frame that the novel has provided for Josilus' revolution. As I will later describe in more detail, in the absence of any epilogue or proleptic feature following Josilus' concluding address to his supporters, the text places a marked emphasis on the process by which revolution will be brought about and, like so many other texts that imagined the need for reform, they cannot imagine concrete aspects of Haiti's future perfect.

[319] « Désormais la révolution ne ramène plus, de toute évidence, à des situations ou à des possibilités données d'avance ; elle mène, au contraire, depuis 1789, vers un futur à ce point inconnu, que chercher à le connaître et à le dominer fait désormais partie de la tache de la politique ». ["From then on, revolution no longer leads us, as is obvious, to situations or possibilities that are given ahead of time ; instead, it leads, since 1789, towards a future that is so unknown that the desire to know it and to have a mastery over it has now become a part of the task of politics."] Koselleck, *Le futur passé*, p. 70.

Despite the narrative penumbrae surrounding any description of the realized future, Josilus nevertheless has strict and clear criteria for what will constitute this "last" revolution in its unfolding. Speaking to his son Adhémar about when he might give the call to action for his followers, he notes:

> Jamais je ne consentirai à donner le signal du mouvement contre ce gouvernement s'il n'est pas solennellement entendu que ce qui doit le remplacer ne sera pas sa continuation. *Pas de nouvelle révolution si la nouvelle révolution ne doit pas amener à la fin du gouvernement militaire.* […] Nous aurions dû y songer après *la guerre d'indépendance*. Cela nous aurait épargné toutes nos *guerres civiles*.[320]
>
> [I will never consent to giving the signal of action against the government if it is not solemnly understood that what replaces it will not be its continuation. *No new revolution if the new revolution will not bring about the end of government by the military.* […] We should have thought about it after *the war of Independence*. That would have saved us all of our *civil wars*.]

Positing the permanent separation of military and political power as the justification for his violent intervention into the political order and the sign by which we will know we have achieved a radical break in Haitian temporality—a true revolution—has immediate implications upon the perception of past, so-called, "revolutions." One need only look as far as to see that in his revisionist glance, Josilus abandons the appellation of "revolution" altogether when referring either to the Haitian Revolution ("guerre d'indépendance") [("war of Independence")] or the many political conflicts of the nineteenth-century ("guerres civiles") [("civil wars")]. Yet, the relationship between these wars clearly isn't one of simple apposition but rather one of causality. Josilus is suggesting that it is because the nineteenth century inherited a political system which privileged the military over the civilian that the state of permanent civil war became a defining feature of Haitian political life.

[320] Marcelin, pp. 54-5. Emphasis mine.

The implications, however, are rather more radical and highlight a curious feature of the Haitian Proclamations (of Independence). Residing on the margins of the Proclamation, just prior to the address proper, we find the following supplemental staging mention: "Le général en chef au peuple d'Haïti." ["The general in chief to the people of Haiti"][321] It is mirrored by the concluding remarks which establish the date and place of its signing, and provide a space for the legitimizing signature of a "J.J. Dessalines." Reading the *Proclamation* as a series of performative speech acts[322] allows us to see how difficult it was to imagine the political situation Josilus is calling for. Even from the cursory evidence I have provided it is clear that the person commanding the authority to declare, the subject the Proclamation emanates from, is "J.J. Dessalines" acting in the capacity of "général en chef" and *not* any abstract, collective subject which could be reducible to the political subject of "the people." As we have seen, "le peuple" is only ever intended to be the *recipient* of the good word. Haiti's brief "Acte de l'Indépendence" is even more militaristic in its staging and content. Here, Dessalines presents himself as "accompagné des généraux de l'armée" ["accompanied by generals of the army"][323] and concludes with a lengthy enumeration of signatories, a veritable who's-who of venerated service members. All of which is to say, if the Haitian Proclamations of Independence take, as their very conditions of

[321] *Proclamation of 1804.*
[322] I am thinking here both of the implicit performativity of Declarations of Independence but also, and importantly in the case of Haiti, the very real, historical precariousness of the Haitian nation following its proclamation of sovereignty posed by the continued military presence of the French, led by General Ferrand, on the Spanish portion of the island. For an account of Ferrand's military and rhetorical prowess see especially, "The Island of Santo Domingo is a dependence of France," and "Ferrand's War Against the Contagion of Haiti: The 'Revolted Borderlands' " in Jenson, Deborah. *Beyond the Slave Narrative: Politics, Sex and Manuscripts in the Haitian Revolution.* Liverpool: University of Liverpool Press, 2011. pp. 107-114, 151-4.
[323] *Acte de l'Indépendence*.

enunciatory possibility, the legitimizing speech of generals-as-generals, how could it be possible, as Josilus seeks in his revolution, to disentangle Haiti from the rule of military officers? Said another way, could it be that the very same spectacular speech which declared Haiti's origin (*independence*) also constituted the original sin of militarism, and condemned Haiti to the condensed, cyclical "civil war" (Koselleck) which Josilus is here lamenting? How would the authority for a civilian government be constituted? From where would it arise? Who, in that case, would speak for the nation? A revolution which would not be the continuation of militarism would also have to, in some way, address these questions of national origin.

This turn away from militarism, requiring both a critical interrogation and rewriting of the origin, serves to explain the relationship that Josilus' followers held with the dead of the revolution. Indeed, the dead in whose name Josilus' men act, are pointedly not the oft-venerated bellicose heads-of-state of Haiti's revolutionary past, who are notably absent from the narrator's account, but the young civilian journalist who dared to call for civilian rule under a constitution. It also confirms our earlier suspicions that the underlying mantra of Josilus' revolution—Vive la Constitution!—was incompatible with Dessalines' revolutionary anticolonial assumption of postcolonial precariousness implicit in his call to "vivre indepéndants ou mourir" ["live free from France or die"]. Nevertheless, Josilus did betray a desire to declare independence, only it was from the domestic tyranny of the nation's revolutionary history. But how does one accomplish such a task?

We shall return to an interrogation of the ways in which the emerging critique of the perennial discourse of "revolution" (*as past-oriented postcolonial anticolonialism*)

had a profound effect upon the kinds of revolutionary action that were legible as properly revolutionary in Josilus' sense. To do so, however, requires us to attend to the complex role given to the grieving Zulma, Labasterre's widow, and the discursive policing by which her actions were construed as largely external to the Revolution which was underway. How it came to be that she, and not Josilus, ultimately gave the signal that set off the revolution, then, is the subject of the next section.

Zulma : The Love/Anger/Madness of Vengeance

Dessalines would have been sympathetic to Zulma's desire to avenge her fiancé. As the acknowledgement of an affective unfinishedness, *vengeance* attempts to resolve the torturous hold that the wounds of the past continues to wield upon the present by offering partial, because always incommensurate, self-fashioned correctives. Given the structural incompleteness of the Dessalinian understanding of postcoloniality, it is thus no surprise that the language of vengeance permeates his proclamation. More than a moral imperative demanded by the dead—though it also that[324]—Dessalines suggests that the sign by which the Haitian Revolution became visible to others at all was a state of continued vengeance. "*Sachez que vous n'avez rien fait* si vous ne donnez aux nations un exemple terrible, mais juste, de la vengeance que doit exercer un peuple fier d'avoir recouvré sa liberté et jaloux de la maintenir ». ["*Know that you have done nothing* if you do not give to the world's nations a terrible, but just, example of the vengeance that a people, proud to have

[324] « Descendrez-vous dans leurs tombes sans les avoir vengés ? Non » ! ["Would you dare descend into their tombs without having avenged them? No!"] *Proclamation de 1805.*

recovered their liberty and jealous of maintaining it, must exact."][325] As Amerindian-inspired texts and histories imagined novel genealogies for Haitian revolutionary thought and culture, they altered the understanding of the dead in whose name one was acting, but not, since they were fundamentally Dessalinian in character, the central importance of vengeance to the project of Haiti. After all, as Emile Nau had noted in the preface to his *Histoire des Caciques d'Haïti* (1854) *:* "Rendre un pays ainsi libre, c'était venger tout ce qui avait été opprimé, c'était se venger soi-même et venger en même temps les malheureux indiens ». ["To free a nation in this way, was to avenge everything that had been oppressed, it meant avenging oneself, and avenging, at the same time, the misfortunate Indians."][326] Indeed, that the phraseology of vengeance is still responsible for framing our understanding of the Haitian Revolution is perhaps made most evident by the title of Laurent Dubois' recently-released and critically-acclaimed history, *Avengers of the New World* (2004)! How, then, did this venerated practice with revolutionary pedigree come to be so maligned when undertaken by Zulma? As we turn our attention to Zulma's project of "vengeance," what interests me most is the way in which, despite the text's best efforts to mobilize the discourse of "revolution" to render her actions illegible as "revolutionary," Zulma is its literal condition of possibility. In this, 'Zulma' suggests a lingering and unresolved tension residing within the concept of "revolution" that haunts any fantasy of violent historical rupture.

As we have seen, Josilus and Adhémar claim to avenge Labasterre's spilled blood in their desire to institute a regime of certain political rights, so it cannot be the

[325] *Proclamation of 1804.* Emphasis mine.
[326] Nau, Emile. *Histoire des Caciques d'Haïti.* Paris : Gustave Guérin et Cie, Editeurs, 1894. p. 14.

case that "vengeance" alone could serve as the discriminating factor that the text is attempting to establish between Josilus and Zulma. Rather, I would argue that what serves to distinguish Zulma's yearning for revenge is its deeply personal—overtly pathologized—relationship to the lost Labasterre. Declining her loss in the feminine, the text is free to discredit her as a 'widow' in a state of unraveling. Note the difference in tone and genre which characterizes Zulma's stated desire for vengeance : "Fixant droit devant elle quelque fantôme invisible, familier, elle murmura: --Oui, oui, je te vengerai, Epami » ["Staring right in front of her at some familiar, invisible ghost, she murmured : --Yes, yes, I will avenge you Epami"] (Marcelin, 110) ! Zulma's quasi-theatrical monologue, uttered in the presence of only the reader, is addressed to the spectral Labasterre whom we are certainly intended to read, both by the diminutive sobriquet and the *tutoiement*, as an extremely intimate relation. And were it not for the fact that Zulma is presented as an unenlightened, nervous young woman who erroneously interprets natural events within a supernatural framework[327], the reader might take her conversation as proof of the presence of an ethereal fiancé rather than as another indication of her avowed mental instability. That is, overcome with loss, she remains what she was, a woman muttering in a corner all to herself.

Yet, what allows this expression of loss to appear as disordered, and marks her orientation to the past as excessive, is precisely her position as woman. (Importantly it is also what makes the redress she seeks possible). Thinking that she has sufficiently

[327] I am thinking here of a later scene during which, while attempting to traverse a field at night, Zulma is overwhelmed with terror at the sound of what appears to her as the sound of many women simultaneously giving birth coming from underground. After fleeing in fright, she later discovers that she was witness to the noise that yams make as they attempt to pierce through the soil. Marcelin, *La vengeance de mama*, pp. 201-4.

mourned the memory of her fiancé, Adhémar asks for Zulma's hand in marriage. He is no sooner rebuffed by the startled Zulma who refuses him on the grounds that she still has a mission to accomplish. Incredulous, Adhémar offers the following revealing rejoinder: "Votre mission?...Vous ne pouvez en avoir qu'une mademoiselle. Etre la femme d'un honnête homme qui vous aime et qui *s'engage à vous faire oublier le passé* » ["*Your mission ?* You cannot have but one, young woman. It is to be the wife of an honest man who loves you and who swears *to make you forget the past*"] (Emphasis mine, 105-6). Twice interpellated as a woman (« mademoiselle », « la femme »), Adhémar is clearly attempting, and the grammar is an indication here ("*ne…que*"), to restrict the affective possibilities available to Zulma. Denying her the full range of emotions and responses to loss, he offers her the consolation, expressed—let us be clear—as an imperative, that comes with a disengagement of the past and the erasure of its painful memories. (In this it is a re-enactment of the scene between the Spanish Ovando and the Amerindian Anacaona in the previous chapter all over again.) But Zulma is tenacious. "Je ne dois pas oublier. Les autres peuvent oublier, moi pas" ["I must not forget. Others can forget, not me"](106). Unaware of the necessarily secretive revolutionary aims of Josilus and his son, Zulma remains understandably convinced of the notion that everyone else has forgotten the death of Labasterre. She thus understands memory as a responsibility and, unfortunately, one that rests uniquely on her shoulders. Importantly though, this implicitly acknowledges that she believes she is equally capable of bearing the burden of loss. In the place of a potentially reproductive heterosexual union (and its attendant futurity), Zulma chooses an orientation which the text renders 'deviant' in its preference for the pain of the past.

The outlines for the critique of a certain relationship with the past, and with any attendant concept of revolution which sustains this "excessive" link, should now start to become readily apparent.[328]

There is another important matter which distinguishes Zulma from Josilus' followers: Zulma's project is not political except incidentally. Nothing in the stated declarations of her intentions, or the admittedly brief glimpses into her character's interiority provided by narration, suggests that Zulma understands what Télémaque's death might mean within any kind of framework of political change. For her, "Télémaque" is the name proper to the individual that killed her fiancé, not the head of an increasingly corrupt government under which the national collective is suffering. And yet, by refashioning the old Dessalinian imperative, "boule kay" (*burning the houses*), she succeeds in "koupe tèt" (*cutting the head*) of the government. In the section that follows we shall trace both the way in which Zulma's eponymous vengeance was expressed and the efforts taken by Josilus to offer a caustic critique of their relationship to a proper revolution (*as novel opening*).

Given what I have been calling the "deviant" orientation of her project it is perhaps unsurprising that the methods that Zulma actualizes in exacting revenge are largely culled from the practices of resistance of the former slaves of Saint-Domingue. Initially, Zulma's plan is composed of two steps. Having succeeded, at great personal cost to her social standing, in convincing Télémaque that she is ready to live as his mistress, Zulma has him schedule a lovers' tête-à-tete in a home that he has

[328] Here I am playing with the spatial retheorization of the metaphor of "orientation" in sexuality borrowed from the work of Sara Ahmed. Ahmed, Sara. *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others.* Durham: Duke University Press, 2006.

sumptuously furnished for the occasion. Once there, she hoped to take advantage of an opportune moment of inattention, as surely the setting would provide, to place a few drops of fatal poison into his cup.

Though failing to cite Makandal explicitly, the old sorcerer from whom Zulma acquires her lethal toxin, clearly inscribes himself in a genealogy that cannot but include the eighteenth-century slave leader, who sought to use poison to even the odds in favor of the slaves. "Je suis héritier des ancêtres africains, qui exercèrent leur droit d'équité souveraine durant des siècles, toujours, toujours, sur les maîtres criminels…Notre mission n'a pas cessé, notre mandat n'a pas pris fin avec l'ancien régime ; au colon barbare a succédé, trop souvent, hélas ! le despote, le sanguinaire sorti de nos rangs» ["I am the legatee of the African ancestors that exercised their right of sovereign equity over the centuries always, always upon criminal slave-owners…Our mission has not ended, our mandate did not end with the *ancien regime*; the barbaric colonist has too often, been succeeded by, alas!, the bloodthirsty despot sprung from our ranks"] (205-6)[329]! Though he confirms Josilus' intuitive sense that the « true revolution » had not yet arrived—otherwise, how could it be that a never-

[329] In this Marcelin is partaking of similar critiques of the Haitian Revolution which refused to see the postcolonial era as a radical departure in the history of the island's power relations. Compare, for example, the old man's critique of the incompleteness of the Haitian Revolution in Marcelin, to his contemporary, Fernand Hibbert's, critique in *Séna* (1905). "Maintenant, poursuivit Gérard, de même qu'après la révolution française on a vu Bonaparte […] de même on a vu les chefs d'état de la Nouvelle Haïti, *continuer comme si rien n'était passé. […] Le système est passé intact aux mains des anciens esclaves, les Haïtiens d'aujourd'hui ».* ["Now, continued Gerard, just as we saw Napoleon arise after the French Revolution […] so too did we see the heads of State of the New Haiti, *continue on as if nothing had happened.* […] *The system was passed on intact to the hands of the former slaves, the Haitians of today*."] Hibbert, Fernand. *Séna.* Port-au-Prince : Editions Henri Deschamps, 1988 [1905]. pp. 125-6.

ending now-domestic stream of despots still ruled over them?—he clearly differs in his approach to this scourge. To an ancient problem, an eternal solution.

Importantly, Zulma does not entrust the poison alone with carrying out her death sentence. Noting the presence of flammable provisions in the basement during the tour she is given of the site, Zulma adjusts her plans and surreptitiously sets the charcoal ablaze during what Télémaque hopes will be an intimate dinner. In this, Zulma instinctively responds to the revolutionary and revanchist imperative to set fire to the dwellings of oppressors. It could be argued that I making much of very little and that Zulma was merely using every resource within her reach to ensure the ultimate success of her project of vengeance. Perhaps. I would be inclined to agree with the skeptical reader were the potential revolutionary valence of *boule kay*, *burning houses* not explicitly a subject of Josilus' meditations.

Speaking with Josilus over what might best serve as the signal to action for their revolutionaries, the General Lafolette offers, in an earlier scene, to burn down one of his small homes. Rather than contemplating the potential strategic utility of Lafolette's suggestion, Josilus' reaction is one of shocked incredulity. "Voulez-vous ne pas dire une chose aussi insensée, mon cher Lafolette ! On a pu employer ce moyen-là *dans le passé*. *Mais, oubliez-vous que nous faisons une révolution justement pour enterrer le passé.* Et puis, comment un homme aussi loyal, aussi juste que vous, peut-il songer à un forfait aussi exécrable » ["Would you please not say such a ridiculous thing, my dear Lafolette ? One may have used that method *in the past. But, do you forget that we are bringing about this revolution precisely to bury the past*. And furthermore, how could a man as loyal and as just as you, think of so heinous a

crime"] (156) ? Josilus' theorization of "revolution" is thus explicitly, and evidently, concerned with severing the relationship that Haitians have cultivated between this revered act—itself synonymous with the original spark of the Haitian Revolution[330]—and their sense of what constituted a legitimate expression of political resistance. Josilus' outright rejection of the past and methods, such as *boule kay*, which have come to be overdetermined by this past, are clear attempts to shed all possible elements which could be legible as a "return," and usher in a "modern" open-ended, unpredictable revolution in Koselleck's sense. Josilus' opposition to Lafolette's suggestion, and we can perceive it in his reaction to Lafolette ("un forfait aussi exécrable") [("so heinous a crime")], is, in part, moral. Indeed, as he notes here to Lafolette, fire is an unfaithful ally because the potential to damage the private property of those who are not the targets of its violence is too high[331]. In fact is the very inability to discriminate between just and unjust targets that makes of the would-be arsons mere imitators of the corrupt officials they seek to overthrow.

Yet, to the extent that the fire that Zulma set claimed no lives other than those she wished to claim and caused no collateral damage, she would seem to present a powerful corrective to Josilus. Indeed, it is this fire, so spectacular to the ever-growing crowd of spectators, that will serve as the long-awaited signal for Josilus'

[330] The chapter describing the August 1791 slave insurrection in Saint-Domingue, that is, the event that is often taken to be the genesis of the Haitian Revolution, is entitled "Fire in the Cane" in Laurent Dubois's *Avengers of the New World*.

[331] « Oubliez-vous toutes les ruines que vous pourriez faire, toutes les misères dont vous seriez l'auteur, toutes les familles que vous réduirez à la faim, à la mendicité, au déshonneur probable ? Vous seriez un Télémaque aussi infâme […] que celui que nous voulons renverser ». ["Do you not realize all of the ruins that you could bring into existence, all of the misery which would have your name on it, all of the families that you would reduce to hunger, begging, and likely disgrace? You would be as infamous a Télémaque […] as the one you seek to overthrow."] Marcelin, p. 157.

Revolution. "Les débris écroulés continuaient de brûler presqu'à plat du sol, *sans danger pour les maisons voisines protégées par les emplacements vides*…La voix de Lafolette, grave et forte, domina subitement le silence : --Vive la Révolution !..En avant, mes amis, pour la Patrie » ["The crumbling debris continued to burn nearly to the ground, *without any danger for the neighboring homes protected by empty spaces*… The voice of Lafolette, solemn and strong, suddenly dominated over the silence : --Long live the Revolution !...Charge forward, my friends, for the homeland"] (Emphasis mine, 249) ! Despite attempts to police our understanding of her actions and motivations as incompatible—if not outright anachronous—with the temporality that Josilus is trying to bring about, Zulma consistently reveals herself to be structurally fundamental to his *futural* revolution.

Zulma's commitment to the methods of revolutionary discontent upon which the nation had been founded, are all reinscribed into Josilus' project when the General Lafolette cries out "Vive la Révolution" in response to the burning house. And Josilus knows it. He is more than aware of the discursive contamination spreading like wildfire across the concept of revolution (*as opening*) within which he has been trying to construct a radical politics. This is why Josilus must still speak out and quell the threat of "revolution" (*as return*) even if only in the mode of the counterfactual. "Hier soir, pendant qu'on proclamait la Révolution, une maison a brûlé *qui aurait pu* amener, puisque personne ne s'occupait d'éteindre le feu, la disparition de plusieurs quartiers, la ruine de nombreuses familles […] *Et si l'incendie se propageant avait détruit une bonne partie de la ville* » ["Last night, while a Revolution was being proclaimed, a house burned down *which could have* lead, since no one saw fit to

extinguish the fire, to the disappearance of several neighborhoods, and to the ruin of numerous families. […] *And if the fire had spread and had destroyed a large part of the city*"] (Emphasis mine, 268-9) ?

I would like to suggest that Josilus' rejection of *boule kay* is being understood largely through the delegitimizing optics of "imitation." After all, he asks the crowd gathered before him, "De quel droit les remplacer [corrupt politicians], si on n'a que le dessein de les imiter » ["What right have we to replace them [corrupt politicians], if we have no other design but to imitate them"] (269)? Said another way, it is not only that the models of the past have become unworthy of imitation—though this too is part of the problem—but that *imitation*, the dominant metahistorical paradigm for adhering the Haitian present to its past since the Declaration of Independence, cannot, almost by definition, lead to something credibly, refreshingly new[332]. Turning Delorme's restrictive historical positivism on its head, Josilus implies that the only way to break out of compressed Haitian time, to change the curve of Haitian history, is to provide the equations with new inputs. As an instrument of *return*, the discourse of "revolution" as *opening* must reject imitation in principal; this is true even if, in the final analysis, as Zulma's structural importance to Josilus' political project demonstrates[333], this task is accomplished less by the absence of imitation as such than

[332] I am thinking of the Dessalinian insistence that the post-Revolutionary Haitians follow in the anticolonial footsteps of their Amerindian predecessors. "Imitons ces peoples qui, portant leur sollicitudes jusque sur l'avenir, et appréhendant de laisser à la postérité l'exemple de la lâcheté, ont préféré être exterminés que rayés du nombre des peuples libres ». ["Let us imitate those people who, bearing their concerns unto the future, and fearing to leave to their posterity and example of their cowardice, preferred to be exterminated rather than stricken from among the free peoples of the world."] *Proclamation de 1804.*

[333] « Durant ces jours troublés, on apprit que Dolympe venait de louer la petite maison de la Grande Rue. Du coup, on ne douta pas que ce ne fût pour l'installation prochaine de Zulma. *Lafolette, au*

by a series of procedures by which the trace of imitation is contained (*boule kay*) or, as we shall see in the next section, suppressed.

Returning to Josilus: Revolution as L' ouverture

Despite Josilus' opposition to the past ("enterrer le passé"), its methods ("*boule kay*"), and the logic of "imitation," his project, I would argue, remains haunted by other spectres of the revolutionary past from whose pull he is trying to escape. Indeed, for all his reiterations of novelty, of "revolution" as *opening*, there is an element of *déjà vu*—however disavowed—to many of his reforms. Avowedly anti-Dessalinian, he is nevertheless devoutly Louverturian. In the section that follows I will show how Josilus frames his revolution in such a way as to displace the structural tension that threatened the constitution of the national community. As we shall see, the Haitian peasant class—the *moun andeyò* (*people beyond*)—was imagined as *beyond* the reach of politics and as such was largely outside the reach of his revolution and the new future towards which he was gesturing. Instead, under the guise of a familiar civilizing beneficence, the agrarian class is subject to a series of paternalistic reforms that attempt to guarantee the functioning of the new state the revolution makes possible. Thus it is not only that the case that community is divided along Trouillot's

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grand contentement d'Adhémar, fit adopter le plan de surveiller chaque soir le logis, et de donner, pour en finir, le signal pendant que le ministre y ferait sa première visite… Il avait remarqué, affirma-t-il, que les plus audacieux sont généralement les moins sur leurs gardes quand l'amour les talonne… ». ["During these trouble days, it had become known that Dolympe had just rented a small house on Grande Rue. No one doubted for an instant that it had been done in order to lodge, rather soon, Zulma. *Lafolette, to the great happiness of Adhémar, had others put into motion his plan to monitor the home each night and to give the final signal while the minister would make his first visit there…* He had remarked, he affirmed, that even the most audacious are generally less on their guard when love is in the air…"] Marcelin, pp. 252-3. Emphasis mine.

infamous line of *nation* and *state*, but, that this dividing line itself marks off two imagined temporalities; the revolution's potential futurity is not a universal guarantee.

In the final chapter of the novel, Josilus, having succeeded in non-violently deposing the existing President, addresses the jubilant crowd overtaking the Place Pétion. After having distanced himself from the duplicitous and self-serving character of Haiti's previous so-called "revolutions" by sardonically deconstructing the *post-coup* acceptance speech, and made explicit the justification for his own extrapolitical intervention, he ends his speech with a series of curious and fetishistic remarks about the Haitian peasantry. If those gathered before him are successful in later implementing a truly civilian government, Josilus suggests that the next stage of the revolution should be a generalized expression of national compassion for the plight of the peasant laborer. "C'est sur [l'instauration du gouvernement civil] que vous fonderez votre nationalité ou…vous ne la fonderez pas. *Et puis*, mes amis, nous devons penser un peu aux misères de notre paysan sur qui pèse toute la servitude du régime militaire » ["It is upon [the instauration of civil government] that you will found your nationality or…you will not found it at all. *And also*, my friends, we should reflect a little bit upon the misery of our peasants on whom all the servitude of our military regime weighs"] (Emphasis mine, 275).

It is impossible to ignore the way in which the Haitian peasantry is excluded as potential or imagined interlocutors. Since the peasants would need no reminder of their extreme deprivation, what Arendt calls the urgency of the life process[334], nor their inherent humanity ("Ne le traitez donc pas en paria") [("do not treat him, then, as

[334] Arendt, p.54

a pariah")], we can only conclude that neither the interpellated community of "nous" nor the addressed "vous" include members of the agrarian class (276). In place of the 1st and 2nd person plurals, the peasants are reduced to the epistemologically containable and reassuring 3rd person singular of ethnography: "notre paysan." Given their exclusion from the "vous," and hence from the project of (re)founding the now civilian nation, it is perhaps unsurprising that that they are literally an *after*thought of its aims. As a marker of a subordinate or later thought, "Et puis" [*also*] serves to short-circuit a potential redefinition of the revolution in terms of compassion across class lines by acknowledging it as an explicit problem that would be addressed at a later time.

If the purpose of a properly civilian government, according to Josilus, is to usher in a novel and previously unrealized notion of citizenship and collective belonging, then he must nevertheless account for the modifications he is making to the existing, if 'expired', national pact. Note the radical departure from Dessalinian thought that marks Josilus' furious *post-coup* critique of "liberté" as the ready-made smokescreen of social distraction wielded by general-politicians who sought to justify their ambitions.

> Depuis la guerre de notre indépendance, ce mot : la liberté ! n'a été qu'*un long parjure*. Vrai à l'époque, puisque c'est son Verbe glorieux qui rénova la face de cette terre, il n'a été depuis que *l'appeau de la duperie nationale*. C'est grâce à lui qu'on nous a pipés jusqu'à ce jour. *Plus ce cri menteur, cet attrape-nigaud*. Je prétends que nous sommes prêts pour un idéal sérieux, que nous devons y marcher avec la volonté de le faire aboutir…[335]
>
> [Ever since the war of independence, this word : liberty ! has *been nothing but a long betrayal*. True at the time, because it was its glorious Verb which transformed the face of this Earth, it has been nothing since but the *siren's song of national duplicity*. It is thanks to it that we have been kept silent until now. *No longer will we suffer this lying cry, this*

[335] Marcelin, *La Vengeance de mama*, p. 267. Emphasis mine.

scam. I claim that we are ready for a serious ideal and that we should walk towards it with the desire to bring it about.]

The problem with organizing a nation around the notion of "liberté," Josilus suggests, is that while the struggle for "liberté" was indeed the condition of possibility for the coalescing of the national community, once Independence had been achieved calls for "liberté" would forever ring hollow. As the expression of Haitian anticolonial, radical antislavery ideology, "liberté," could not be readily or easily adapted to the needs of Haitian postcolonial political thought without running up against its historically manifest untruths. In other words, "liberté" had an expiration date. As is clear, nothing could be further from Dessalines' repeated insistence on the precarity and unfinishedness of Independence as a project than Josilus' attempt to conceive of a Haitian postcoloniality without regards to antislavery (and hence anticolonialism). To do so requires the positing of a new organizing principle even if, as Josilus himself divulges in his imprecision, such a principle remains elusive ("un idéal sérieux") [("a serious ideal")]. In this, Josilus precisely anticipates Nick Nesbitt's analysis of the ideology of "liberté" in the Independence era. "In this sense, what had been a struggle to instantiate the very real, positive freedom of a society without slaves in the 1790s became a *hollow, negative right after 1804*, once that minimum guarantee had been achieved" (Nesbitt, 191, Emphasis mine)[336].

Beyond being anachronous in Josilus' time, however, a desire to avert "liberté" as an organizing principle should also be read as the desire to displace the tension between the Haitian state and nation, which itself was instantiated by divergent

[336] Nesbitt, Nick. *Universal Emancipation : The Haitian Revolution and the Radical Enlightenment*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2008. p. 191. Emphasis mine.

theorizations of the concept. Writing in his now-classic *Haiti: State against Nation* (1990), Michel-Rolph Trouillot provided readers with a powerful analytic for comprehending the deep ideological struggles that were taking place over the meaning of "liberty" throughout the years of revolutionary struggle.

> Hence even though state and nation were taking place at the same time and as part of the same revolutionary process, they were launched in opposite directions. State and nation were tied by the idea of liberty, but the nation measured its liberty in Sunday markets and in the right to work on its garden plots. The Louverture party, on the other hand, embryo of the state-to-come and ferocious defender of the same liberty, was firmly attached to the Plantation system. The leaders wanted export crops; the cultivators wanted land and food.[337]

Much has been made of the fundamental contradiction between the idea of unconditional freedom cherished by the Haitian ex-slave, agrarian class and the early Haitian state's desire to enforce plantation-style monoculture as a means of ensuring its economic survival in the postcolonial age. However, what Trouillot is suggesting in his account, and which will be critical to our reading of the temporality of Josilus' revolution as regards the Haitian peasant class, is that the divergence at the heart of the concept of "liberty" also inaugurated a temporal break. ("Hence even though state and nation were *taking place at the same time* and as part of the same revolutionary process, *they were launched in opposite directions.*") Thus, I would argue that Josilus' attempt to circumvent the ideology of "liberté" is a desire, in part, to avert (and disavow) the simultaneous non-simultaneity ushered in by the first, founding revolutionary process. He can only do so, however, by positing the peasant class—the class that will remain on Louverturian time—as external and subsequent to ("et puis")

[337] Trouillot, Michel-Rolph. *Haiti : State against Nation: The Origins and Legacy of Duvalierism*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1990. pp. 44.

[*also, moreover*] a true and unique Haitian citizenship predicated on a novel understanding of Haitian postcolonialism.

Vesouriche

That Josilus appears immediately unconcerned with specific social and economic aims in his political revolution should not lead us to believe that he does not have ideas for reforms at the social level, especially as they pertain to the rural poor. Indeed, by the time that we, as readers, are introduced to the noble Josilus, he has already radically transformed the inhabitants of the countryside plantation-village of Vesouriche, for whom he serves as both benefactor and absentee taskmaster. Unlike in the case of his explicitly revolutionary project, Josilus fails to emphasize the radical *newness* of any of these rural reforms, which, given their transparent reliance on revolutionary discourses from the past, would have been incredibly difficult for him to absorb into any project of "revolution" as opening into a new future.

Focalized through the eyes of the propertied class[338], the plantation-village of Vesouriche is presented to the reader as a rather idyllic, highly-efficient—productivity will be the order of the day—space for the transformation of sugar cane into tafia-grade syrup. Though never explicitly stated as such, the organization of Vesouriche clearly reflects Josilus' anxieties of Haitian peasant indolence; every element of the

[338] Note, for example, the meaning which Josilus tries to impose upon the arguably equivocal sight of fields of well-maintained sugar cane: "Le vert intense, bien près du bleu foncé de leurs feuilles visibles dans le crépuscule, semblait former *un long tapis d'espérance à l'infini*" ["The intense green, close to the dark blue of their leaves still visible in the twilight, seemed to form *a long mat of hope towards infinity*."] (Emphasis mine, 51). The language of the proximity of contrasting colors is often used, as it is in *Stella*, to allegorize the *red* and *blue* bands of the Haitian flag, that is, to give an account of national unity. In this is it is troubling to see that the banner that best symbolizes the hope for the future is the mythic, pre-National emblem of the planter classes of Saint-Domingue still waving to Louverturian time.

village is designed to provide a segment of the population with an activity intended to maximize the output of his cane crop and their labor. Josilus will thus visit a grammar school where boys too young to work in the fields are taught to read and write, a general store where everyday provisions can be obtained without leaving the village, mills where freshly-cut cane is pressed into syrup, the sugar cane fields themselves which provide the central occupation of able-bodied men, and small plots of land where women and young girls see to the cultivation of comestible crops and livestock when they are not tending to the upkeep of the village's homes. We need look no further for the ethics that should govern life in Vesouriche—literally the city rich with *vesou*, the syrup by-product of pressed cane—than the uncanny greeting with which Josilus addresses the attendant Diaquoi when he arrives in the village: "Ah! Diaquoi, s'exclama M. Josilus Jean-Charles, la belle journée! Les moulins ne se plaindront pas; ils mangeront largement aujourd'hui. Comment ça va le travail ? Pas de ralentissement » ["Ah! Diaquoi, exclaimed Mr. Josilus Jean-Charles, what a beautiful day! The mills certainly won't be complaining ; they'll have plenty to eat today. How is the work coming along? No slow down, I hope"] (62)? In this, one cannot but hear the echoes of Louverture's anxiety about the pace of agricultural production: "La colonie, étant essentiellement agricole, ne peut souffrir *la moindre interruption* dans les travaux de ses cultures. » ["The colony, being essentially agricultural, cannot suffer *the slightest interruption* in work done in its fields"][339]

[339] Janvier, *Les Constitutions d'Haïti*. p. 10. Emphasis mine.

For the chapter to be felicitous it is absolutely critical that the reader come to believe, with each expression of gratitude Josilus receives from a villager[340], that the project of establishing large-scale neo-plantations in Haiti is not only beneficial to the economic needs of the state and those he will interpellate as citizens, but that the reforms which reshape the ignorant, indolent peasant class into productive agrarian subjects are understood to be beneficial in their own right. That is, that under the right circumstances, the plantation system could be made capable of assimilating Trouillot's para-capitalist *nation* through persuasion rather than coercion. The chapter then functions as a guided tour, yes, but as with all guided tours, the transparent plenitude to which it promises access—here, the exemplary efficiency of the (*post)colonial* plantation—is a fiction made possible only insofar as incongruous elements are occluded, minimized or neutralized.

Yet for each institution of social organization that Josilus establishes to ensure the functioning of his plantation, the villagers respond and resist, refashioning, albeit in an evidently asymmetric way, the conditions under which they are willing to return to an equivocal status of (un)freedom. The most pressing, for Diaquoi, who relays his

[340] Since I am arguing for a Louverturian reading of Vesouriche, I find it worth noting, briefly, that the excited words with which Josilus is greeted place him in the exact structural position which Louverture's legislation imagined for the plantation owner. Compare the following scene from *Vengeance* to Louverture's description of the social organization of the plantation. "Des fillettes, têtes et pieds nus sur la terre brûlante, courent à lui, presque toutes répétant pêle-mêle, ensemble : Bonjour, parrain ! Bonjour, parrain ! Il tire de sa poche des pièces de menue monnaie qu'il leur distribue ». ["Young girls, heads and feet uncovered on the burning earth, ran to him, almost all repeating on and off, together: Hello, Godfather! Hello, Godfather! From his pocket he takes out coins of little value and hands them out."] Marcelin, p. 84. « Chaque habitation est une manufacture qui exige une réunion de cultivateurs et d'ouvriers ; c'est l'asile tranquille d'une active et constante famille, dont le propriétaire du sol ou son représentant est nécessairement le père ». ["Each plantation is a factory that requires the union of workers and farmers ; it is the tranquil shelter of an active and faithful family, whose owner or whose representative is necessarily its father."] Constitution of 1801, Article 15. Janvier, p. 10.

fear as soon as he meets Josilus at the entrance gate, is one readily familiar to plantation owners and former slaves alike: arson. "Vous savez aussi qu'il a eu un commencement d'incendie dans les cannes à Mirette ? Je suis persuadé que c'est le fait de la malveillance. Aussi ai-je fait carabiner deux ou trois sentiers trop loin de notre surveillance. Et je ne dors que d'un œil » ["Did you also happen to hear that there were the beginnings of a fire in the sugar cane fields of Mirette? I am convinced that this is the work of malevolence. So I've had two or three of the paths farthest from our monitoring secured with rifles. Also, I sleep only with one eye shut"] (63). Elsewhere, at the primary school, the reader is privy to conversations between Josilus and the schoolmaster which suggest that attendance at the school remained a point of contention with many parents who could not see the inherent utility of the literacy and numeracy skills being taught, suggesting, above all, that these parents foresaw a lifetime of predictable agricultural labor for their children. Similarly, during his walk between the village school and general store, Josilus passes before a courtyard famous for its Sunday cock-fights, and admits to being unable to change his workers' attitude towards what he perceives as an indecent sport[341].

In fact, though Josilus' investment in the plantation at Vesouriche is never explicitly linked to the radically different future he hopes to make possible with his revolution, they nevertheless find their point of contact in the notion of demilitarization. As we have seen, Josilus' central political reform is intended to ensure that civilian government and institutions take precedence over enigmatic or despotic military personas propped up by the rule of force. Yet the military bodies

[341] Marcelin, p. 83.

that now confer advantage to the oppressive tyrants must have once come from somewhere else; furthermore, once achieved, demilitarization posits that these men would naturally find other suitable occupations. Adhémar comes closest to making this link as he and his father approach the plantation: "Il faut des bras à l'agriculture et on les enlève pour le métier militaire, du moins ce qu'on appelle de ce nom…Quand on nous les rend, ils viennent porter le trouble, le désordre dans nos ateliers avec les habitudes de paresse, d'ivrognerie qu'on a fait contracter à ces malheureux. On ferait mieux de les garder » ["Agriculture needs hands to work it and these are taken away by the military professions, or, at least what goes by that name…When these men are given back to us, they come bearing trouble and disorder in our plantations with habits of laziness and drunkenness that these unfortunate men were made to contract. We would do better to keep them"] (53). That is, the militarization of the Haitian rural inhabitants is seen as a vector in the transmission of vices incompatible with the re-emergence of a widespread plantation culture. As paramilitaries these men are a dangerous menace to a stable political order, but, as the narrator aims to prove in his tour of Vesouriche, as well-managed employees in whom the value of work, education, and family has been painstakingly inculcated, they can become productive (field) hands of the Haitian plantation state.

One might reasonably object that there was indeed another model for thinking through the myriad complexities—legal, social, and, perhaps the greatest, those on the level of the national imaginary—of attempting to reinstate plantation labor. What of King Henri Christophe's forced-labor legal codes as inscribed in the infamous *Code Henry* (1812), such a skeptic reader might rightly ask, does *he* not address the paradox

of the postcolonial plantation that Josilus had labored to establish in Vesouriche?[342] Indeed, reading Vergniaud Leconte's occupation-era apologist history of Christophe's reign reveals similar attempts to minimize accounts of potential peasant dissension.

> Aucune coercition, sauf celle qui fut forcément nécessaire. Aucune arrière-pensée de les garder dans la subordination ou l'oppression pour les empêcher de se soulever : *ils ont échangé leur liberté contre la garantie de vivre dans un lieu sûr, d'y avoir un travail pour se sustenter, et d'y posséder un foyer*. […] [Christophe] demandait beaucoup aux cultivateurs, et beaucoup au reste de la nation, sans méchanceté, simplement parce que, d'après lui, il le fallait dans l'ordre économique aussi bien que dans l'ordre politique.[343]
>
> [There was no coercion, except that which was strictly necessary. There was no ulterior motive to keep them in a state of subordination or oppression to prevent them from rising up: *they exchanged their liberty for the guaranty of living in a safe place, of having enough work to sustain themselves, and of having a home.* […] [Christophe] asked a lot of his farmers, and a lot of the rest of the nation, without cruelty, but only because, in his mind, it was as necessary for the economic order as it was for the political order.]

Leconte thus asks readers to believe that the agrarian class in Christophe's kingdom was willing to exchange its recently acquired "liberty," for security, steady work, and the promise of a shelter to call their own. Similarly, to the extent that the chapter devoted to Vesouriche is entirely focalized through the motions of Josilus throughout his plantation—thus denying us access to the explicit or implicit interiority of the peasant class in the absence of their 'benefactor'—the guided tour performs a similar rhetorical gesture. In the absence of visibly coercive measures, because the chapter takes place only once the considerable difficulties Josilus must have had in implementing his regime have subsided, the reader is asked, against the frequent, though hushed whispers of resistance, to frame Josilus' actions in a largely positive, pragmatic light.

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[342] See especially, « Des Obligations des Agriculteurs et de la Police des Ateliers » in Christophe, Henri. « Loi concernant la Culture ». *Code Henry*. Vol. 7. Cap-Henry : P. Roux, Imprimeur du Roi, 1812. pp. 5-8. http://archive.org/details/codehenry00hait. pp. 613-617.

[343] Leconte, Vergniaud. *Henri Christophe dans l'histoire d'Haïti*. Paris : Editions Berger-Levrault, 1931. pp. 295-6. Emphasis mine.

To read Vesouriche as an implicit sanction of Christophe's solution to the nation/state problem, however, is to misunderstand the ways in which Josilus' claim to revolution is fundamentally predicated upon a split temporality. For subjects recognizable as "political" the "revolution" will consist in a novel opening towards an as-of-yet ineffable civilian future that will itself be made possible by a separate "revolution" operating at the level of the rural poor. For the latter, this "revolution" will constitute a haunting return to a time that could only be Louverturian, even if, for reasons of conceptual coherence, this second revolution must be disavowed and largely disconnected from Josilus' revolutionary aims. In fact, it is precisely because Christophe utilized the wealth extracted from plantation labor to fund the *military* infrastructure so crucial to his anticolonial aims that his project is so incompatible with Josilus' reconceptualization of postcoloniality outside of the demands of a bellicose anticolonialism. In so doing, it is possible that Josilus sought to imagine novel futures that would not be bound by the anticolonial, ever-cyclical trappings of "1804," by averting the Dessalinian anticolonial postcolonial notion of "revolution" (*as restoration*) and thus the dominant national narrative of "Haiti" (*as black-restored Quisqueya*) altogether. In other words, by returning the peasants to the Louverture-led years of the Revolution, when antislavery and relative autonomy where thinkable without an attendant anticolonialism, Josilus, I would argue, hopes to rewrite the Revolution's later years and allow Haiti to develop alternative futures. It is his own, unmistakably partial way of responding to Colin Dayan's search for a "golden age" amidst the "succession of revolutions" of Haitian history[344].

[344] « How do we locate a time of promise, a crucible of invention and creativity in the succession of

II: Occupational Hazards: Testing the Limits of "1804"

« Leurs pas pesants tombent sur notre sol avec ostentation. Des pas de vainqueurs rythmant le bruit de la Victoire dans une capitale conquise. »[345]

[*Their heavy steps fall upon our land with ostentation. The steps of victors give rhythm to the sound of Victory in a conquered capital.*]

In July of 1915, sensing growing opposition to his regime, then Haitian President Vilbrun Sam called for the brutal execution of 167 political prisoners. As the narrator in Léon Laleau's novel, *Le choc* (1932) relates of the event "Une de ces femmes, interrogée, a dit que son fils a été tué en prison, qu'il y a eu, dans la maison d'arrêt de Port-au-Prince, un massacre général, et que de ce massacre, seuls cinq prisonniers ont pu se sauver » [« When interrogated, one of these women said that her son had been killed in prison, that there had been, in one of the jails of Port-au-Prince, a widespread massacre, and that, of this massacre, only five prisoners had been able to save themselves »] (42). This spectacular display of violence was met with another when, overwhelmed with the desire for retribution, a crowd of Haitians seized the President from within the French Legation where he had been hiding and proceeded to dismember him[346]. The United States, already equipped with a Caribbean foreign policy[347] including existing plans for occupying Haiti, responded by sending more

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revolutions that always seem to leave the majority of people in the same place?" Dayan, Colin. *Haiti, History and the Gods.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998. p. 86.

[345] Laleau, *Le choc*, p. 60.

[346] Dubois, *Haiti*, p. 210.

[347] Though the American occupations of Cuba and Puerto Rico in 1898, and the United States' involvement in the construction of the Panama Canal are all important in figuring a fin-de-siècle American Caribbean policy, I am thinking specifically here of the way in which occupations could be justified following the pronouncement of the Roosevelt Corollary (1904) to the Monroe Doctrine. Briefly, this directive, aiming to secure the monopoly of American power in the region, allowed for U.S. military intervention into New World nations which were deemed at risk for European occupation. Dubois, pp. 201-2, 211.

than 300 marines to secure Port-au-Prince, and, ostensibly, to bring an end to the nation's political "irregularities."[348] Haitians, whose anticolonial orientation was central to their self-definition, were under the heel of a foreign-power once more.

Accounts and recollections of the period register a profound sense of disquieting novelty during these first alarming moments. An eye-witness present when the marines disembarked remarked, "I understood then, that a new phase of our history was beginning" (Dubois, 215). Similarly, Roger Dorsinville notes the collective shock by which his compatriots were struck: "I understood the newness of their presence by the stupefaction on the faces and the silence suddenly around me" (216). Indeed, despite American assurances of a swift return of Haitian political institutions to Haitian hands, the occupation would not end until 1934. During these two decades Americans fundamentally transformed the Haitian political, economic, and social landscape. Two changes, however, were critical to fomenting Haitian opposition to American rule and each, in their own way, allowed Haitians to tap into existing strategies of resistance and reframe the occupation in Dessalinian terms. The first was the reinstatement of the nearly-forgotten *corvée* clause of the Code Rural of 1864, allowing for the government conscription of able-bodied men for the purposes of public works projects[349]. Second, following a controversial constitutional drafting process, the American-sponsored constitution of 1918 had eliminated the ban on foreign ownership, a feature of Haitian constitutional law since 1805![350] Taken

[348] Dubois, p. 214.
[349] Dubois, p. 239.
[350] « Aucun blanc, quelle que soit sa nation, ne mettra le pied sur ce territoire, à titre de maître ou de propriétaire et ne pourra à l'avenir y acquérir aucune propriété ». ["No white, regardless of the nation from which he hails, shall place one foot on this territory, in the capacity of slaveowner or of property

together, the legal forced labor of black bodies by white foreigners and the restoration of a right to property, lost to whites since 'Saint-Domingue', these psychic violations must have profoundly shocked Haitian notions of national identity.

That the corvée bore an uncanny resemblance to the slavery against which their ancestors had fought was a fact lost neither on then agricultural minister, Dantès Bellegarde, nor on the rural workers who organized themselves into an anticolonial guerrilla force led by Charlemagne Péralte. As a result, and returning to our concern with "revolution," it is easier to see why typical notions of revolution as restoration might have been more available for thought and others, such as Josilus' attempt to think through postcoloniality absent anticoloniality would have fallen on deaf ears. Thinking through alternative postcolonial potentialities requires, at the very least, some recognizable marker to which one can point—"1804"—which definitively shows the colonization to be 'over,' however tenacious and pernicious its after-effects. As a spectacularly violent, ongoing process, this could not be the case with the American occupation.

Curiously, however, as we shall see, in addition to conceiving of "revolution" as a return, there was a growing critique among other occupation-era texts of "1804." On the one hand, the texts of this period clearly document an anxiety, as we saw with Josilus, with the oft-repeated histories of the Haitian Revolution; as if "1804" itself were the central problem of Haitian temporality. On the other hand, there is a troubling realization, when the Americans at last leave, that the allegory of "1804" may not be applicable to 1934, that the second independence is nothing like the first,

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owner; at no point in the future, shall he be able to acquire any property."] Article 12 of the Constitution of 1805 in Janvier, p.32.

and that Haitian postcoloniality might now have to be conceptualized without the inherited apparatus of "1804."

In the pages that follow I will concentrate my analysis on two texts written during the final stages of the American occupation of Haiti. The first, *Le drapeau de demain* (1931), is a two-act play in verse written by the young Jean Brierre. In this brief piece, Brierre restages the moment when Dessalines, fuming at the idea that the French did not believe the black revolutionaries of Saint-Domingue had anticolonial intentions, violently tore out the white banner from the French tricolor. Recast in the transnational nationalism of the burgeoning indigenist cultural movement, *Drapeau* insists that the "Haitian revolution" for which the flag was an emblem had not only to recur in Haiti itself, so that the Americans might finally be gone, but repeat itself across the face of the globe anywhere blacks were under the heel of race oppression. The text is thus heavily invested in redefining the stakes and significance of revolution in terms that, while Dessalinian in inspiration, are resolutely modern. In contrast, the novel, *La blanche négresse* (1934), written shortly after the end of occupation, adopts a much more complicated relationship with the past of the Haitian revolution. Though the text would like to see "1804" along the lines of an empowering inheritance, the novel explicitly rejects the logic of analogy which might allow the end of American occupation—the "second" independence—to be read according to the overly familiar script of "1804." How this rejection came to be, despite the novel's framing of anticolonial resistance as "revolutionary," and what it meant for the post-American future that Haitians could imagine will be the focus of this final section.

***Anticolonial Possessions : Le Drapeau de demain* (1931)**

The young Jean Brierre was only a teenager when he was profoundly struck during a stroll along the quintessentially Parisian Champs-Elysées. At one end of the avenue, post-Revolutionary France's most recognizable monument, the Arc de Triomphe; at the other: the Luxor Obelisk. It is at that instant, according to the tale of racial self-actualization he relates in the *Avant-Propos* to *Le drapeau de demain*, that he understood the choice placed before Haitians: "Nous avons à choisir entre l'Arc de Triomphe et l'Obélisque" ["We must choose between the Arc de Triomphe and the Obelisk"] (iv).[351] That is, were Haitians citizens a cultural province of France, as Etzer Vilaire and other members of *La Ronde* had once suggested?[352] Or, were they, as Price-Mars posited, transplanted Africans surviving as best they could on a land that was essentially foreign to them?[353] Even beyond the mutually exclusive essentialist terms of the choice to be made, it is hard *not* to see, in light of Christopher Miller's French Atlantic triangular analytic, how Brierre's transatlantic voyage to France made doubly explicit the erasure of any indigenous (*post-transplant*, *Caribbean*) contributions to Haitian identity[354]. This is all the more striking since, as an indigenist

[351] Brierre, J.F. *Le drapeau de demain : poème dramatique en deux actes*. Port-au-Prince : Imprimerie haïtienne, 1931. p. iv.
[352] See in particular Vilaire, Etzer. "Préface." *Poésies complètes. Tome I : Années tendres.* Paris : Albert Messein Editeur, 1914. pp. v-viii. and « Crédo littéraire ». *Poésies complètes. Tome 3 : Nouveaux Poèmes.* Paris : Albert Messein, 1919. pp. 97-101.
[353] « Ce peuple qui a eu sinon la plus belle, du moins la plus attachante, la plus émouvante histoire du monde—celle de la transplantation d'une race humaine sur un sol étranger ». ["This people which has had if not the most beautiful, then the most appealing, the most moving history in the world—that of the transplantation of a human race upon a foreign land."] Price-Mars, Jean. *Ainsi parla l'oncle suivi par Revisiter l'oncle.* Montréal, Québec : Editions Mémoire d'encrier, 2009. p. 7.
[354] Miller, Christopher. *The French Atlantic Slave Trade: Literature and Culture of the Slave Trade.* Durham: Duke University Press, 2008.

(*afro-privileging*) text, it clearly seeks to valorize the Haitian peasantry, even if, in the final analysis, this peasant will remain reduced to inordinately legible, and somewhat cliché, expressions of rural culture. In contrast to Josilus' modest attempt to uncouple postcoloniality and Haitian futurity from anticolonialism, Brierre, writing under the very real loss of territorial and, in some cases corporeal, sovereignty, returned to Dessalinian anticolonial discourses of "revolution." As we shall see, he did not simply reanimate expressions as they were. Though *Le drapeau de demain* is constructed as a fantasy of return, it must still account for the altogether twentieth-century decision to inherit the Luxor Obelisk rather than the land of Anacaona. That is, it must provide an account of how Haitians themselves became, not the proper proprietors ("l'armée indigène"), but occupants of a foreign land in their own right (*une race transplantée*).[355]

Before proceeding, however, I should note that the title for this section, "Anticolonial Possessions" is inspired by the work done by Dubreuil on the *phrase* of possession that emerged through the development of the New World colony in French. In "Possessions (post)coloniales," Dubreuil shows how the phrase of "possession," which at first was synonymous with "colony" and territorial expansion under the ancien régime (21), came to take on the additional valence of the bodies of the indigenous Amerindians possessed by spirits (23), and later, through *the Code noir*, allowed for the transformation of black bodies into possessions for those living on the

[355] « C'est l'histoire *des noirs d'Afrique transplantés à Saint-Domingue* et y prenant conscience de leur humanité que nous racontons dans ce volume ». ["It is this history of African blacks, transplanted to Saint-Domingue and becoming aware of their humanity there that we seek to relate in this volume."] Vaval, Duraciné. *Histoire de la littérature haïtienne ou « L'âme noire ».* Port-au-Prince : Imprimerie Aug. A. Héraux, 1933. p.7. Emphasis mine.

royal overseas possessions (24).[356] More generally, Dubreuil has argued that "civilization" has acted to banish possessions outside of the rational societies of Europe while it uses the possessions it constructs and locates outside of Europe as the justification for its own policies of domination. In the section that follows, these anticolonial possessions refer at once to the intertextuality that haunts *Le drapeau* as well as to the staged possession of the central characters by heroes of the revolutionary period during a scene of re-enactment. In another sense, it refers to the desire to confront the "(post)colonial" phrase of possession that allowed for the continued denigration of blackness by staging a scene of possessive excess in which modern Haitians are imagined to be psychically possessed not only by slaves, *Le code noir*'s possessions, but by those that possessed them, their masters. Dubreuil also helps us to explain, in part, how apocryphal tales of Dessalines's possession by the Virgin Mary might have become incompatible with the kind of origin story that Indigenism wanted to tell.

The time has come to present the reader with a brief outline of *Le drapeau de demain*'s narrative contours. As indicated in the longer form version of the title, the text takes the form of a two act play written in classically alternating alexandrine rhyme. The first act centers on the debates of three young Haitian students Pierre, René, and Guy after the latter claims to be troubled, like the speaker of Coicou's "Vision," by the timbre in a spectral voice he believes to have heard. On one side, Guy, who believes in the restorative potential of Haiti's revolutionary history, imagines the distressed spirit of Dessalines drawing the contrasts between the

[356] Dubreuil, Laurent. *L'empire du langage : Colonies et francophonie.* Paris : Hermann, 2008.

aspirations of the generals of 1804 and the stark realities of living under American rule. "Las de ne rien trouver de ce qu'il a laissé, / doutant de tout, il s'en irait dans la campagne. / […] / Et revoyant un peuple dans la boue accroupi, / des hommes en haillons trainant par les corvées / La faim, la soif, qui les tiraillent sans répit. / […] / Fulgurant de colère et débout, l'Empereur, / s'engloutirait amer, dans ces lambeaux de gloire » [« Weary of finding nothing of what he left behind / doubting everything, he wandered along the countryside. / […] / And beholding a people in the mud, squatted down, / men in trailing rags bound to work / Pangs of hunger and thirst without escape. / […]/ Dazzling with rage and swiftly upright, the Emperor, / became engulfed, bitter, in tatters of glory"] (Brierre, 7-8). Here, René serves as Guy's pro-American foil, calling out the violent excesses of Dessalinian antislavery ("*koupe tèt, boule kay*"), and urging for a new time ("des temps nouveaux") ushered in by 'civilization''s ever-advancing timepiece[357]. Their disputes are brought to a halt when they meet an old man born in Bréda (identified only as "le vieillard") whose mother's dying wish was to have him go to the site where Dessalines first fashioned the national flag. However, having waited too long before making his patriotic pilgrimage, he has come to believe that he will die before fulfilling his moral obligation. The second act's central focus, then, will be to have the students re-enact the moments leading up to creation of the national emblem for the old man, whose dying visions of the future bring the piece to an end. For our purposes, I would like to use the re-imagined

[357] "Les temps sont *périmés* d'inhumaines rancœurs/ Et sur le seuil *des temps nouveaux*, toute éplorée / Civilisation ! tu conquiers tous les cœurs ». [« The time for inhuman resentment has expired / and upon the threshold of *new times,* covered in tears, Civilization! You conquer all of our hearts."] *Brierre*, p. 12. Emphasis mine.

moment of national (dis)identification[358] to tell two tales. The first: one of possession and the relationship between possessions, the story we relate about the flag, and the revitalized africanist component of "indigenity." In the second, I would like to return to the question of "revolution"; if the chief concern of the play is its eponymous *drapeau de demain*, we must attend to the future that such a gesture seeks to make possible.

Taking his place before the others, Guy, playing the role of Dessalines, begins the reproduction as follows: "Africains, nous vivons cette heure solennelle / où le sort des vivants se lie au sort des morts" [Africans, we live at this solemn hour/ when the fate of the living is tied to the fate of the dead"] (26). Paratextually, however, the reader needed no reminder that the living and the dead were linked; for the duration of the scene of re-enactment, the students will be identified in the script as "Guy-Dessalines," "Pierre-Pétion," and "René-Christophe." That is, as corporeal unities housing two cumulative[359], psychic personalities it is tempting to read the re-enactment in the mode of possession generally and vodou possession in particular. This is all the more so since the voices of the students (as students) are muffled during the entire re-enactment, leaving the generals, and only the generals, free to give voice to quasquicentennial concerns. In fact, even outside of the boundaries of the re-enactment, the text itself is noticeably marked, as we shall see, by repeated instances of textual possession in the form of intertextuality. Crucially, these are never

[358] As I have noted in my first chapter, the uniquely Haitian flag was created after the French mistakenly assumed the previous Haitian banner (based on France's tricolor) meant that the anticolonial impulses of revolutionary Haitians had been exaggerated.

[359] That the names are conjoined with a dash rather than any marker of addition or supplementation (+, *et*, &, etc.) suggests the radical distinctiveness *and* the supra-unity of the two elements.

"faithful" citations as such but, like the spontaneous, improvisational performances that make up vodou's possessions by the loa, must be readily recognizable as a variation within a band of tolerance to be felicitous.

Legitimized by the historicity which undergirds them, Brierre's variations are free to adapt the revolutionary thought of "1804" to the ideological needs of occupation-era indigenism. We have already borne witness to one such instance; in the preceding couplet Guy-Dessalines begins by addressing his interlocutors not as "indigènes" (*native to the Americas*) but as "Africains." This is certainly contrary to the historical Dessalines's insistence and national collectivizing in the Proclamation that postcolonial Haitians needed to "assurer à jamais l'empire de la liberté *dans le pays qui nous a vu naître*»[360] ["to forever ensure the empire of liberty *in the country which saw us be born*"], even if, as he certainly knew, much of the ex-slave population of early Haiti was indeed African born[361]. Similarly, over and against Article 14 of the Imperial Constitution of 1805 which prescribed the eradication of distinctions based on variations of skin color in favor of the generic and shared identifier "noir,"[362] René-Christophe argues precisely that what is shared among the still-visible color differences is their *African* essence. "C'est l'amer préjugé qui divise les cœurs / mais

[360] *Proclamation of 1804.* Emphasis mine.

[361] It goes almost without saying that as a privileging of the African component of Haitian identity, the process of *de-indigenization* required by "indigenism" requires a conscious re-evaluation of the imagined Amerindian inheritance that was the focus of the previous chapter. See particularly Price-Mars's interrogation of the dubious African origins of the anticolonial slogan, "Aïa bomba," in light of its supposed Amerindian origins. Price-Mars, *Ainsi parla l'oncle suivi par Revisiter l'oncle*, pp. 132-3.

[362] Article 14 : « Toute acceptation de couleur parmi les enfants d'une seule et même famille dont le chef de l'Etat est le père devant nécessairement cesser, les Haïtiens ne seront désormais connus que sous la dénomination générique de noirs ». ["Any and all recognition of color among the children of the one and same family whose head of State is the father having to, by necessity, cease, Haitians will no longer be known but by the generic denomination of blacks."] Janvier, *Les constitutions d'Haïti*, p. 32.

nous arborerons l'orgueil de notre race./ Quel que soit le pigment, le cœur est africain" ["It is that bitter prejudice that divides hearts / but we will bear the pride of our race. / Whatever the pigment, the heart is African"] (29). It is perhaps unsurprising given what I am arguing here that the most recognizable instance of textual possession is also the moment where the text's ideological manipulations are most visible. Refashioning Boisrond Tonnerre's infamous macabre anticolonial "blazon,"[363] Brierre shifts the emphasis to the bodies "split" by vodou possession.

> Quand les mots, trop obscurs, ne m'ont pas assez dit.
> Le vent me conte bas, des exploits inédits.
> Le tambour dans la nuit, sa fureur syncopée
> Font parler des esprits, fanatisent des corps.
> *Un jour, si je devais écrire notre histoire,*
> *Païen, il me faudrait pour table un assetor [tambour],*
> *Pour rythme, le vaudou remuant la nuit noire.*[364]
>
> [When words, too unintelligible, haven't told me enough.
> The wind relates in hushed tones, unprecedented exploits.
> The drum in the night, its syncopated fury
> Make the spirits talk, make bodies fanatical.
> *One day, if I should have to write our history,*
> *Pagan, I would need, as a table, an assetor [drum],*
> *For a rhythm, vodou energizing the dark night.*]

That is, Vodou becomes a critical historical practice because it is through the beats of the drummer-historian that the Haitian spirits, drawn out of their eternal realms, can be made to bear witness to untold tales through the bodies of their enthralled worshippers. In this, Guy appears to implicitly acknowledge the secular nature of written history, or at least the difficulty of translating, as Chakrabarty would say, a

[363] « Pour rédiger cet acte [d'Indépendance], il nous faut la peau d'un blanc pour parchemin, son crâne pour écritoire, son sang pour encre et une baïonnette pour plume. » ["In order to draft this act, what is needed is the skin of a white man as a parchment, his skull as an inkwell, his blood as ink, and a bayonet as a quill"] Ardouin, *Etudes*. Vol. 2. Tome 6. p. 7.
[364] Brierre, p. 5.

world in which gods and spirits have agency into the godless, continuous and empty time of History[365]. Perhaps this is why, aside from a tempering of the anticolonial violence intended by Boisrond-Tonnerre, Guy sought to distance himself from the extended metaphor of writing and textuality. After all, his own metaphor risks catachresis the moment he introduces 'rhythm,' which has no immediate connotations with the act of writing that it takes as its stated premise ("*si je devais écrire notre histoire"*) [(*If I should have to write our history)*]. Given this acknowledgement of the role of the supernatural in human affairs generally, and the privileging of vodou specifically, we might legitimately ask how the play portrays what is arguably one of its most climactic moments: the instant when Guy, "possessed" by Dessalines, rips out the white stripe of the French tricolor to create the Haitian flag.

I am not the first to link the idea of "possession" to this critical moment of Haitian history. According to narratives Colin Dayan transcribes in her *Haiti, History and the Gods* (1998), Dessalines *himself* was possessed when he tore the white strip from the French flag.

> In Léogane, in the 1970s I heard people recount that Dessalines cut out the white strip of the French flag while possessed by the warrior spirit Ogun. Brutus in *L'homme d'airain* (1946) presents an even more compelling version. He tells a story of "undying memory," heard and passed on by Justin Lhérisson in his history class at the Lycée Pétion in Port-au-Prince in the 1930s. It was not a spirit of African origins that possessed Dessalines, but "the Holy Virgin, protectress of the blacks." Then, Dessalines cursed in "Congo

[365] Chakrabarty, Dipesh. "Translating Life-worlds into Labor and History." *Provincializing Europe : Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference.* Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000. pp.72-95. The Haitian historian Vergniaud Leconte had also attempted to think through the role that the supernatural had played in Haitian history. In recounting how Christophe came to be stricken by paralysis at the supposed presence of a ghost during mass, Leconte notes, "Ce fait, très rare, dans les annales des peuples, n'est pas incroyable. Quand les esprits veulent nous frapper, ils n'ont pas besoin de se montrer ». ["This fact, which is quite rare in the annals of peoples, is not unbelievable. When the spirits wish to strike us, they do not have to show themselves."] Leconte, *Henri Christophe dans l'histoire d'Haïti*, p. 421.

> language" (the sacred language for direct communication with the spirits and "then in French against the Whites who dared believe 'the Independents wanted to remain French'." Brutus concludes, "He was in a mystic trance, possessed by the spirit when he said: "*Monsieur, tear out the white from the flag.*"'"[366]

What is fascinating about this citation, especially in light of Brierre's insistence that Haitians needed to choose between mutually exclusive African and European origins, is the betrayal of syncretic religious codes and a specialized linguistic plurality. We are told that it was specifically *not* a spirit of African origins but rather the Holy Virgin, manifesting in her indigenously Caribbean form that took hold of an entranced Dessalines. And yet, it is with the "Congo language," explicitly marked as African in origin and privileged for communication with the supernatural, that he first makes clear the anticolonial will for which the flag became the visible emblem. This mythological scene thus imagines a space for the valorization of Haitian "africanity" while simultaneously allowing for the significant contributions of creolized, New World creations rendered invisible in Brierre's restrictive ontological paradigm. Furthermore, as the echo to the Bois Caiman ceremony that may have launched the revolution in 1791, this scene not only posits the importance of supernatural justifications to the agents of secular history, but presents gods and spirits as potent historical actors in their own right.

The contrasts with the representation of this same moment in Brierre's *Drapeau de demain* should now be evident.

> Guy-Dessalines *(déchirant le blanc du tricolore) :* Noirs et jaunes, soyons unis, soyons des frères. / Extirpons l'étranger du sol et du Drapeau./ Bleu de tous nos espoirs ! Rouge de nos colères !/ Ce qui faisait de nous d'intraitables rivaux/ Devient, ce jour, le signe

[366] Dayan, Colin. *Haiti, History and the Gods*, p.52.

> enfin qui nous rallie./ Réveillez-vous, les Morts, soyez témoins, les monts, /Nous sommes désormais frères dans la Patrie ! / Pour demain, pour toujours ! Vous tous ![367]
>
> [Guy-Dessalines (*tearing the white from the tricolor)*: Blacks and yellows [mulattos], let us unite, let us be brothers. / Let us uproot the foreigner from the land and from the Flag. / Blue with all of our hopes! / Red with our wrath! / What had once made of us intractable rivals/ has become, in this day, the sign which at last unites us./ Wake from your slumber, oh Dead, bear witness, hills, / We are now brothers before our Homeland! / For tomorrow, for always! You all!"]

Absent the "possession" of Guy by Dessalines which remains in/visible to the presumed spectator under the guise of re-enactment, there is nothing about Brierre's account that could not be imagined within the bounds of secular historical writing. Nor is the affective energy the same. Lhérisson's account clearly presents the French as the addressees of Dessalines's forceful symbolic gesture. In contrast, Guy-Dessalines places the emphasis less on the violence to be exacted towards the now anonymous "étranger" and more on the unification he hopes to accomplish by conjoining the banner's red and blue bands. Indeed, the entire passage can be read as a performative binding together the national imaginary's two communities of color into eternal fraternal union. What begins as a collective imperative of communion and association ("soyons unis, soyons des frères") ["let us unite, let us be brothers"], is affirmed by the land ("soyez témoins, les monts") ["bear witness, hills"], and, becomes felicitous by the end of Guy-Dessalines' address: "Nous sommes *désormais* frères dans la Patrie! / Pour demain, pour toujours!" ["We are now brothers before our Homeland! For tomorrow, for always"] (29). Unlike René-Christophe's assertion that what bound the true groups together was a shared African essence ("le coeur est africain"), Guy-Dessalines suggests here that it is an agreement about the horizon of

[367] Brierre, p. 29.

expectations and a mutual interpretation of the reasons-for-revolution that can force adherence of these two otherwise antagonist groups.

All of which leads us to another critical point: if part of the symbolic violence Dessalines hoped to realize in tearing away the white of the French tricolor was anticolonial in its aims, did it not stand to reason that this foundational performance itself had to be continuously rehearsed since early Haitian postcolonial anticolonialism endlessly extended the Haitian Revolution into the future? [368] Following the re-enactment Guy himself suggests as much: "Pour consoler nos cœurs, nos rêves et nos yeux […] nous avons répété ton geste, Ô Dessalines » [« In order to console our hearts, our dreams and our eyes […] we have repeated your gesture, oh Dessalines"] (31). Yet, as the fantasy of an always already realized anticolonialism—the white band is forever absent from it—the Haitian bicolor is in some ways incompatible with the unfinishedness of postcolonial anticolonialism. One of the concerns that repetition thus seeks to alleviate is the question of how to render visible the *precariousness into the future* or, the time of anticoloniality, in the static banner which is to be its emblem.

Repetition, however, is not the only way. After Guy's congratulatory remarks, le vieillard, issues a chilling warning about the former's fundamental misunderstanding of what it is their repetition has accomplished.

> Le Vieillard : Du drapeau, vous croyez avoir chassé le blanc ?/ […]/ Hélas non, mes enfants ! Le colon rit encore/ A travers les fils bleus et rouges. L'anathème/ et tous les mots sont un bruit morne pour le fort./ *Car cette toile, enfants, dites, qui l'a tissée ?/ Des mains blanches, des mains de yankis, d'allemands ?/ Leur empreinte sera toujours ineffacée./ Dans la toile elle dort, forte invinciblement.* / Si serré soit le fil, il laisse des

[368] Article 28: "Au premier coup de canon d'alarme, les villes disparaissent et la nation est débout ». [« At the first blast from the canon of alarm, cities disappear and the nation stands vigilant »] Janvier, p. 40.

> espaces /où perceront un jour des griffes d'oppresseurs/ pour meurtrir nos enfants, étouffer notre race.[369]
>
> [Le Vieillard : Do you really believe to have chased off the White man from the Flag ? / […] / I'm afraid not, my sons! The colonist still has the last laugh/ through the blue and red threads. Anathema / and all words are a bleak sound for the strong. / *Because this threaded canvas, my children, can you say who has spun it?/ White hands, the hands of Yankees, of Germans? / Their mark will forever linger unable to be erased. / In this textile it sleeps, quite invincibly.* / However tightly woven the threads, they leave spaces where, one day the talons of the oppressors will break through/ in order to wound our children, and strangle our race."]

Channeling Dessalines's warning in the proclamation of Independence that everything still bore the mark of the French, the old man reminds the students that as a derivative emblem—"car cette toile, enfants, dites qui l'a tissée"—the imprint of Whites upon the Haitian flag will forever be ineffaceable. By calling on the students to see the absence of the white band as the trace of its (spectral) presence ("*dans la toile elle dort, forte invinciblement*"), le vieillard succeeds in inscribing the ominous Dessalinian anticolonial time of *precarity* and *unfinishedness* over the celebratory future of its realization. What's more, whereas Guy-Dessalines (and many others) took the juxtaposition of the lingering solid red and blue bands as the signifier for the overcoming of racial tensions among Haitians, the old man carefully examines the stitch work and discovers troubling breaches from which foreign oppressors might once more grasp Haiti within their predatory talons. This suggests, of course, that the alliance of colors—made concrete in the revolutionary collaboration of Generals Dessalines and Pétion—was, like Haitian postcoloniality, itself precarious, and a source of constant struggle to maintain.

If Guy had wanted to repeat the Dessalinian gesture it is because he too believed, prior to the re-enactment, that the survival of the white band posed a

[369] Brierre, p. 31. Emphasis mine.

problem to his contemporaries. The white band was still absent from the Haitian flag, Guy argues, because Haitians had internalized it and the denigration of blackness for which it stood. "Mais nous l'avons gardée en nous, la tranche blanche" ["But we have kept it within us, that white strip"] (6). In this Haitian take on W.E.B. Du Bois' notion of double-consciousness, Guy imagines the white strip as the source of a haunting *other* and an antagonizing force of possession, with which Haitians must share their uniquely black bodies. "L'esclave, le paria, l'être humain qu'on conspue / se heurtant au colon, spectacle incohérent !/ *Deux ennemis en nous se combattent, se tuent.* / Quand nous voulons neutraliser l'hérédité / *Que fil à fil nous recousons la tranche blanche »* ["The slave, the pariah, the human being that is shouted down, / comes up against the colonist, what an incoherent spectacle ! / *Within us, two enemies fight against one another, kill each other*. / When we seek to neutralize heredity / *then thread by thread, we stitch the white band once more*"] (Emphasis mine, 9). Unlike Du Bois, however, Guy sees the struggle not as one between *blackness* and *nationality*—the relationship between nationality and blackness has been treated as a pleonasm since Dessalines's Imperial constitution—but the rather more historicized antipathy between a *transplanted African slave* and his *colonial master*. Alarmingly, then, the antislavery struggles of the Haitian Revolution endlessly play on inside the divided consciousness of twentieth century Haitians.

Given this desire to inscribe both a disavowed African inheritance and a precarious anticolonial futurity within the Haitian flag, it would not be difficult to show, at this point, that the "revolution" which this text imagines is restorative in nature and largely legible, though not wholly compatible, within the Dessalinian

tradition. That is, in this play "revolution" is motivated by an anticolonial transnational nationalism imagined outside of the bounds of the circulation of print.[370] (*Though not, as we shall see, outside of the metaphors dependent on textuality.*) Furthermore, the peasant's transparent "authenticity" and still-intelligible *africanity* mark him as a privileged actor in the struggle against the historically real forces of twentieth-century occupation. Like the prophets and seers of Amerindian-inspired texts which looked forward to the day when their deaths would be avenged by their brothers in chains, the play too concludes with the divinations of a dying elderly figure glancing into the future that others, in this case the young students, would help to realize. It is to this final vision, and its implicit assumptions about the future that "revolution" makes possible, which we now turn.

Sensing the approaching chill of death, the students ask *le vieillard* to explicate the national symbol and describe to them the various meanings that Dessalines ("l'Aïeul") intended to inscribe in the flag. "Le vieillard (*illuminé*): Le Drapeau, mes enfants pour tous est la Patrie. / C'est la communauté de pensées, d'idéal, / Sacrifices anciens, souffrances, agonie, / de ceux qui ne sont plus. C'est le spectre moral / de ceux qui sont tombés, leur effort et leur rage / continués fidèlement par les vivants: / C'est l'histoire d'un peuple en une seule page » [Le vieillard (*in a vision*) : The Flag, my children, is for all the Homeland. / It is the community of thoughts, the ideal, / Former sacrifices, suffering, agony, / of those that are no longer. It is the moral

[370] This is not meant to imply that Dessalines himself was not a participant in the circulation of print. As Deborah Jenson has convincingly argued, Dessalines actively used the technology of print and textual media to not only promote the legitimacy of Haitian sovereignty but to make the case that trade with Haiti was not contrary to the *Law of Nations*. See "Dessalines's America" in Jenson, pp. 122-160.

specter / of those who have fallen, their effort and their rage / faithfully carried on by the living: / It is the history of a people in a single page"] (34). That is, *le vieillard*, suggests that the flag be read in the mode of three distinct but deeply interrelated modes. In the first couplet, the flag is identified not only with the nation itself—its ostensible signifying purpose of differentiation and uniqueness—but with terms that anticipate Benedict Anderson's own phrasing of national identification: "la communauté de pensées, d'idéal." Woven into the flag, in other words, are the projected, shared ideals binding together the imagined community. These ideals then serve as the haunting testament, in both senses, outlining the responsibilities of the living in light of the sacrifices of the dead. Read as a monument—and the students' inquiry doubly confirms our suspicions—the flag loses its ability to transmit memory with the passing of each generation and thus requires a consistent rearticulation of its meaning if it is to serve as a bridge between the living and the dead. What is the play, after all, but an attempt to inscribe a meaning onto the flag for the generation of Haitians, like Brierre, for whom "l'occupation [américaine] fut un fait accompli" ["the American Occupation was an established fact"] (i). Finally, and this is critically important for the future that "revolution" in *Drapeau* could imagine, the flag is seen as containing within in it, the entire history of the Haitian people. That is, it is neither the synchronous collective of shared ideals in the present, nor the diachronic link between the living and the dead, but the two, aggregated across the whole of Haitian history. Given the *precarity* of Haitian postcolonialism that the play has attempted to inscribe onto the flag—and the presence of Americans on Haitian soil certainly gave this precarity a valence it had never had in the nineteenth century—it is no wonder, then,

that the play conceived of Haitian history as imminently knowable and epistemologically bounded (*une seule page*). What was it, after all, but the repeated tale of anticolonial struggles stretching from Caonabo, through Dessalines, to Charlemagne Péralte forever unto the future?

Undergirding the hermeneutic of the flag and much of the old man's vision is a shift away from textuality that nevertheless remains bound to the metaphors of writing. This privileging of non scriptural modes of inscription (pictorial, corporeal, etc.) is predicated, I would argue, upon the valorization of traditionally "unschooled" peasant resistance against the Americans as the restoration of a national anticolonial inheritance[371]. Over and against Anderson's expectation that the simultaneity of the nation's timepiece be set to the circulation of print culture, it is the Haitian flag imagined as a band of two colors, as we have seen, that serves to unite together the community of thoughts. And, though it borrows the metaphor of the "page" which renders it intelligible, the idea that the red and blue threads of the flag, could, like a Caribbean *quipu*, encode the Gordian knot of Haitian history, recognizably performs this movement away from textuality.

Similarly, when nearing the end of his vision, he offers one final interpretation of what it is the flag means: "Le Drapeau, mes enfants, c'est l'âme de l'Afrique,/ qui

[371] "Mil neuf cent quinze vint. Enfin l'on vit l'élite, / l'héroïque, la vraie, annoncer le réveil. / Elle qui ne savait ni Platon ni Théocrite, /dressant le bronze de leur front contre le soleil, / Et s'appelant Sully, Péralte, Batraville,/ Tous ceux dont le tambour voudouesque berça /les tendres jours et loin du luxe vain des villes ». [Nineteen fifteen came. And at last we saw the elite / the heroic one, the true one, announce their awakening. / The elite that knew neither Plato nor Theocritus,/ raising the bronze of their foreheads against the sun, / And answering to the names of Sully, Péralte, Batraville, / All those for whom the vodou drum lulled/ their gentle days, far from the vain luxury of the cities"] Brierre, p.36.

s'éveille brutale, au cri de liberté, / et planté à Saint-Domingue, au cœur des Amériques /--*Les droits de l'homme étaient écrits sur du papier--/ dans des pages de sang, les droits de notre race* » [« The Flag, my children, is the soul of Africa, / which brutally awakens, at the cry of liberty, / and planted into the soil of Saint-Domingue, in the heart of the Americas / --*The rights of man were written upon paper—/ in pages of blood, the rights of our race*"] (Emphasis mine, 36). Though the notion of a charter of rights is seen itself as universal, it is clear that the old man displays a warranted anxiety that the legislative performatives of constitutional textuality would not suffice to guarantee these same rights and recognitions to blacks. This is not surprising; neither the American nor French Revolutions intended to include men and women of color within their understanding of "liberty." As a particular exception within the universal, the rights of blacks must be underwritten, authorized and enforced by bloodied struggle.

Beyond the movement of particularization marked by the distance from regimes of textuality, however, we can sense a double motion: an agglutinative, aggregative sweep constructing a transnational nationalism out of a shared "africanity." As with René-Christophe's Haitians who remained authentically African despite their epidermal variations, the Haitian *national* flag is imagined as a non-indigenous transplant—it is, after all, the soul of Africa herself—that was brought to the New World. Similarly, the rights that are secured through violent struggle are said to apply not to "Haitians," but those members of "notre race" ["our race."]

In fact, to the extent that this text is able to pierce the veil of the future and address the anticipated result of the anticolonial struggles of Brierre's peasant elite at

all, the focus is undeniably on the elaboration of a transatlantic, transnational Black Nationalism that nevertheless remains Haitian. That is, it is through the establishment of a transnational nationalism that could serve as the guarantor of the rights of blacks around the world that the discourse and imagery of "revolution" are made manifest. "Que tous les noirs enfin, du monde, qu'on opprime,/ ceux d'Amérique, ceux d'Afrique, tous les noirs, / tous les faibles enfin que la force décime, / puissent à l'horizon, dans les ombres des soirs,/ Voir apparaître enfin, échevelé, en flamme,/ *avec à son sommet le bonnet phrygien*/ […] /le drapeau haïtien/ Etendard incarnant l'âme de notre race, celui de tous les noirs » ["May all the blacks of the world, at last, all those that are being oppressed, / those in the Americas, those in Africa, all blacks, / may they see appear, at last, disheveled, in flames, / *with a Phrygian cap at its summit*/ […] / the Haitian flag. / The standard embodying the soul of our race, and that of all of blacks"] (Emphasis mine, 36). Taken from its position within the coat of arms that overlays the blue and red stripes of the Haitian flag, the Phrygian cap is here placed atop the standard and forms a doubly potent icon of revolution, antislavery and here, the struggle against racially motivated oppression on both sides of the Atlantic.

To some extent we have been here before; in her analysis of the citizenship clauses of the early Haitian constitutions Sibylle Fischer noted: "the transnational links that could have been an obstacle to national exclusivism become an ingredient of nationalism. It is transnationalism turned inward. This, I would argue, is the genealogy of the twentieth-century indigenist nationalism in Haiti" (Fischer, 241). And, were we to look back at *le vieillard*'s vision of transnational union within Fischer's analytic, we would immediately notice that though there is no explicit

mention of a non-interference clause—promising that Haitians would not themselves lift other blacks out of oppression—there is also no standard bearer in his representation. *Le vieillard* only hopes that one day a mystic flag, burning but presumably unconsumed, will materialize and lead these non-Haitian blacks out of subjugation. Finally, it is worth repeating, since we are speaking of Fischer's transnationalism turned inward, that the diachronic confraternity of suffering that allowed for the fictive Amerindian inheritance is here reformulated as a synchronous transnationality of anguish ("que tous les noirs enfin, du monde, qu'on opprime"). Yet there is only one flag which could unite this brotherhood of simultaneous black suffering: the explicitly Haitian flag, which we have already been told is none other than the souls of Africa and the black race made cloth[372]. The oppressed blacks of the world were waiting not for revolutions that would end their domination; they were waiting for the *Haitian Revolution* to recur on their soil.[373] In this, it is a powerful, though obviously partial and asymmetric, reappropriation of the conceptual apparatus at the heart of Chakrabarty's historicism. For it was *out of an Africanized Haiti and not Europe* that other, racially particularized scripts for the 'modern', that which,

[372] This identification between the essence of the black race with Haitians has been noted by other texts contemporary with Brierre's *Drapeau de demain* (1931). Duraciné Vaval entitled his history of *Haitian* literature, *Histoire de la littérature haïtienne ou l'âme noire* (1933). Similarly, in the introduction to Milo Rigaud's *Jésus ou Legba* (1932) the reader learns that the text is intended to be "une enquête sur *la race noire*" for which "il faut être au courant de *l'histoire d'Haïti* ». Rigaud, Milo. *Jésus ou Legba ? ou les dieux se battent.* Poitiers, France : Amis de la poésie : Fédération d'artistes amateurs, 1933. pp. 7,8.

[373] « Une société noire aisée, cultivée, s'est formée dans l'Afrique du Sud, et je lisais dernièrement dans le Times, je crois, *combien haut elle place notre Dessalines* ! Tandis que nous, nous ignorons leur Chaka, un véritable grand homme—*presque un Toussaint cafre* ». [« A cmmultivated and comfortable black society has taken shape in South Africa, and I was recently reading in the Times, I think, *just how highly they esteemed our Dessalines!* While we, know nothing of their Chaka, one of those great men—*nearly a kaffir Toussaint*"] Hibbert, Fernand. *Les Thazar*. Port-au-Prince : Editions Deschamps, 1988. [1907]. p. 51, emphasis mine.

"already happened elsewhere and which has to be reproduced, mechanically, or otherwise, with a local content" were conceivable.[374]

The concept of "revolution" that emerges from *Le Drapeau de demain* is thus overworked with substantive and lingering tensions. On the one hand, Brierre's emphasis on the Phrygian Cap—itself overdetermined by strata of revolutionary, antislavery connotations—suggest both a *restoration* (it is a constitutive element of the *Haitian* flag) and the potential for *new, unexpected beginnings* as in the French and Haitian cases. Similarly, if, according to Fischer, the explicit vagueness of the citizenship clauses of the early constitutions suggest that Haiti was once conceived as the *singular* land of a transnational antislavery, the *global*, *reproduced* revolutions in *le vieillard*'s vision make of each land where blacks are attempting to overcome their oppressors other 'Haiti's.[375] Though the notion of the iterability of global revolution is a "modern" phenomenon according to Koselleck[376], retooling the Haitian Revolution through textual and corporeal possession and re-enactment, for *Haitians (as oppressed blacks) themselves under occupation* cannot be read but as the fantasy of return to its inspiring anticolonial, antislavery origins.

We should thus not be surprised to find that the closing moment of the play, which overlaps with *le vieillard*'s dying breaths, returns the world's oppressed to the final climactic battle of the Haitian Revolution. "En avant! En avant! Opprimés de la race! / Vous pouvez, soyez fiers, montez dans la lumière. / Afin que s'imprimant en

[374] Meaghan Morris as quoted in Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*, p. 39.
[375] Fischer, p.241.
[376] "Autrement dit, toutes les variantes de la « Révoltution » durant notre époque moderne visent en termes spatiaux à une révolution mondiale ». ["Said another way, all of the varieties of « Revolution » during our modern era seek, in spatial terms, a global revolution."] Koselleck, *Le futur passé*, p. 73.

lui comme une face, / claque au cœur du Drapeau *le rythme de Vertières* » ["Forward ! Forward ! Oppressed members of the race ! / You can, be proud, rise up into the light. / So that, impressed upon it like a face, / the *rhythm of Vertières* may slam into the heart of the Flag."] (emphasis mine, 38). The tension in the meaning of "revolution" is readily apparent between the exceedingly common spatial metaphors of forward and elevated movement, suggesting the unidirectionality of linear "progress"—whose futural effects remain, as they have been throughout the entire period which concerns us, ineffable— and the return to the defining moment of "1803." That is, if Haitians (and South Africans, and African-Americans, etc.) are successful in securing their equality through violent struggle ("dans les pages de sang") following the model of the 'original' Haitian Revolution, and there is no doubt that the association of radical antislavery and anticolonialism limits its "reproducibility," then this model still fails to provide a conceptual framework for constructing societies once this oppression has been addressed. As an affirmation of peasant religiosity, "africanity" and non-textual epistemologies, *Le drapeau de demain*, does strive to transform the meaning of "revolution" under the American occupation, only it remains constricted, as we see here and as Frankétienne famously said of the indigenists, by its backward looking glance[377].

[377] "Quand on parle de quête d'identité, on oublie que la quête implique une recherche, une création. Il y a un homme haïtien à créer, il y a un homme antillais à créer, et cette création dynamique est inscrite dans l'histoire. *Cette quête va du présent vers l'avenir*…Les indigénistes sont des passéistes ». [«When one speaks of a quest for identity, one forgets that the quest implies a search, and a creation. The Haitian man must yet be created, the Antillean man must yet be created, and this dynamic creation is inscribed in history. *This quest extends from the present towards the future…*The indigenists are creatures of, and for, the past."] Frankétienne as quoted in Confiant, Rafaël. « Brèves

Incommensurate histories: The « Second » Independence? : La Blanche Négresse (1934)

—Myrtana, les mânes de vos ancêtres doivent frissonner de bonheur à la nouvelle de la…seconde indépendance.
—Non.

[*—Myrtana, the spirits of your ancestors must be shaking with happiness at the news of the…second independence.*
—No.]

If the American occupation of Haiti was being conceptualized along the same lines as the French colonization of Saint-Domingue—and the canonization of the anticolonial guerrilla warrior Charlemagne Péralte (1886-1920)[378] suggests that it was—shouldn't "1934" have been conceivable along the lines of a new "1804"? That is, after all, what texts such as Brierre's own *Drapeau de demain* were suggesting. When, in 1934, however, the occupation came to an end, it is clear the relationship between the so-called "second" independence and "1804" was much more ambiguous than previous texts had anticipated. In concluding this chapter, I would briefly like to address how thinking about "revolution" changed once it was no longer possible, with the departure of the Americans, to conceive of anticolonial struggle, (so inherent to Haitian understandings of Revolution) as an active process. In other words, what did "revolution" look like in retrospect and, now that it was over, was it finally possible to see where it might lead?

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considérations sur l'indigénisme ». in *Ainsi parla l'oncle suivi de revisiter l'oncle*, p. 326. Emphasis mine.

[378] For an overview of Péralte's role in the Caco Rebellion of the early occupation, see "Occupation" in *Haiti: The Aftershocks of History*, particularly pp. 243-263. Péralte is praised and mourned in numerous works of the period including the dedication of Stéphen Alexis's *Le nègre masque* (1933), the epilogue of Milo Rigaud's *Jésus ou Legba* (1933), and the concluding pages of *La Blanche négresse* (1934). That he remained an important figure in the historical memory of Haitian-inflected black transnationalism is attested to by the ode in his honor found in René Depestre's *Un arc-en-ciel pour l'occident chrétien* (1966).

I would like to offer an answer to these questions by turning to an analysis of Cléante Valcin's post-occupation novel, *La Blanche négresse* (1934) for several strategic reasons. On the one hand, though Valcin's novel is focalized largely through the marriage plotting of what might be called Haiti's technocratic, middle-classes, it is also concerned, to a lesser extent it is true, with the ways in which the vodou spirituality of the peasants had been transformed and commoditized by the get-rich-quick schemes of avaricious Americans. It is thus perhaps not surprising that the novel received what might arguably called institutional indigenism's highest honor: a preface penned by Jean Price-Mars. Noting the ease with which Valcin weaves the most pressing sociopolitical concerns of her day into the narrative, Price-Mars remarks that the novel, "ce mélange de fiction et de réalisme," ["this blend of fiction and realism"] comes across as nothing less than an astounding slice of contemporary history (ii).[379] Furthermore, it is this interest in the day's headlines that allows us to link Valcin to Brierre. If Fernand Hibbert had included a brief cameo by renowned author, Frédéric Marcelin, in *Séna* (1905) as a gauge of Haitian self-referential verisimilitude[380], Valcin goes several steps further. The world of the reform-minded Guy Vanel, impossible love interest of the female protagonist, Laurence, is populated by several extent occupation era-thinkers and members of the politically militant class including Stéphen Alexis, Jacques Roumain, Antonio Vieux, Jean Price-Mars, and *Le Drapeau*'s Jean Brierre among others still. Finally, as a novel that documents both the

[379] Valcin, Cléante. *La blanche négresse.* Port-au-Prince : Imprimerie-Editeur, 1934. p. ii.
[380] Inserting contemporary real life persons and events—"les choses qui occupent l'attention publique dans la plus flagrante actualité"—into novels could be seen as an attempt to constitute the simultaneity of the literate nation by constructing hybrid texts that were part novel, part 'newspaper'. Price-Mars in *La blanche négresse*, p.ii.

final years of occupation *and* the first moments of the "second" independence—a formulation to which we shall return—*La blanche négresse*, allows us to document the shifting valence of "1804" once the invading presence had once more left Haiti's shores.

And while it is beyond the scope of this chapter to discuss the contributions of Valcin, Haiti's first female novelist, to the development of an indigenous feminism, I feel it is nevertheless important to note, if only in passing, the ways in which Laurence not only offers several vocal critiques of the position that women have traditionally held in marriage, but ultimately defeats the novel's otherwise commonplace marriage plot. That marriage could make of free women domestic slaves, that it made of them oppressed beings specifically declined in the feminine, and in need of an explicitly feminist revolution, that is, in short, what Laurence *herself* adds to complicate Brierre's understanding of "liberty" and the global con*fraternity* of black suffering[381].

La blanche négresse tells the tale of the French Raoul Desvallons, a widower who has since remarried the young Lucienne, and his daughter Laurence, who move to immigrant-friendly, American-occupied Haiti after being unable to find work in France. Once in Haiti, Laurence falls in love with the young Haitian lawyer, Guy, who later asks for her hand in marriage. Forced by her father and stepmother to break off her engagement in favor of the American, Robert Wattson, she reluctantly agrees to marry him, and after several demonstrations of affection and the birth of their daughter, Eveline, she comes to feel love for him. The marriage comes to a sudden

[381] "Il est temps que le mariage ne fasse plus d'une femme libre, une opprimée,…Tenez, moi, grâce à ce mariage je suis une esclave que seul le divorce libérera » ["The time has come for marriage to stop transforming free women into oppressed women, … Look at me, for example; as a result of this marriage I have become a slave that only divorce will set free."] Valcin, p. 126.

end when Laurence receives an unexpected letter from a great uncle in Martinique who has decided to leave his inheritance to her. Included with the letter, however, is a photograph which reveals him, and hence, Laurence, to be a person of color, the eponymous *blanche négresse*. Overwhelmed with contradictory feelings of love and humiliation, Robert abandons Laurence and Eveline in Haiti and commits suicide.

Despite this affective framing, however, the sociopolitical realities of Haitian occupation are never really off-scene. As devoted members of the literary circle, *Haïti-France-Amérique*, the Desvallons are privy to a series of conversations about a variety of subjects including the extent of race prejudice amongst Haitians and the stalling of Haitian progress. (In this, the club serves the important function, found in numerous post-Marcelin novels, of fostering discussion of contemporary political issues among its central protagonists.) Furthermore, while the novel could have simply eliminated Guy Vanel from the plot following Laurence's forced rejection, he re-emerges in the second half of the novel as a political militant and founder of *La lutte sincère*, a sociopolitical journal dedicated to the needs of Haiti's underserved proletariat. Neither should we forget that the narrator herself is imminently interested in chronicling the events of the final years of occupation and that as such descriptions of political protests, critiques of American governance, and criticism of the Haitian bourgeoisie's capacity for mimicry all serve to counterpoint the more personal, amorous thrust of the novel's plot. It is from these moments that we shall be able to answer the question of "revolution" at the end of occupation.

Prior to the novel's conclusion, and the departure of the Americans, "1804" is deployed by aggrieved Haitians as a call for justice: it is the threat of a future righting

of wrongs. "Quant à nous, Haïtiens, nous n'entendons pas rester éternellement sous la tutelle américaine *qui est une des plus grandes injustices* que nous ayons subies après l'affaire Luders. *Nous ferons un nouveau 1804* » ["As for us, Haitians, we do not intend to remain eternally in American custody, *which is one of the greatest injustices* that we have suffered aside from the Luders scandal. *We will bring about a new 1804"*] (Emphasis mine, 63). What is striking about this brief passage, for our purposes, is the idea that "1804" is conceived of as an iterable, repeatable event. Despite the extreme metaphorical economy of "1804," we can nevertheless surmise, from the previous reference to the American occupation, that the mission of "1804" is first and foremost anticolonial. The 1929 protest of the students of the *Ecole Centrale d'Agriculture* is described in similar terms. "Mais dans trois jours c'était "La Grève"… "La Grève"! Evénement troublant, révolte aussi téméraire qu'inattendue, réveil brutal, sauvage du sang des Aïeux de 1804 dans les veines des jeunes petits nègres, incompris et maltraités par un éducateur blanc» [« But in three days it was « The Strike »… « The Strike » ! A troubling event, a revolt as daring as it was unexpected, the brutal, savage awakening of the blood of the Ancestors of 1804 in the veins of the small, young blacks, misunderstood and mistreated by a white educator »] (99-100). Reimagining the Haitian Revolution as an explicitly genetic inheritance—*chronosomes*, if you will—that could violently switch from recessive to active given the right political situation is not only empowering, since it insinuates an immediacy with Haiti's glorified past[382], but suggests that the Revolution of "1804" was

[382] Vergniaud Leconte concludes his account of the life of Henri Christophe by longing for this very immediacy between the time of the occupation and that of the Haitian past. "Ah! Si l'on pouvait se donner l'illusion *de transporter votre temps dans le nôtre,* sauf à élaguer quelques erreurs ou quelques

immanently, indeed structurally, *reproducible.* While the anticolonialism in the second case expresses itself more as a critique of the American handling of the *ECA*'s administration more generally and of its director, Freeman, specifically, the student strike, we are later told, succeeded in securing concessions on the part of the Americans and, more importantly, in shaking American overconfidence in the Haitian sphere[383]. In both cases, "1804" connotes not only the notion of a positive *return* but still contains within it the comforting, futural promise of vengeance.

When, in the novel's final pages, however, the nearly twenty year occupation of Haiti comes to an end; when, at long last, Haiti is restored to Haitians and the potential historical parallels with "1804" seem most evident, the text explicitly calls out the failure of this allegorizing perspective. In this crucial closing scene, Laurence, having just learned of the suicide of Robert via cablegram, works through her feelings of loss with her friend, Myrtana when they suddenly hear outbursts of joy in the streets after the announcement of the imminent departure of the Americans.

> --Myrtana, les mânes de vos ancêtres doivent frissonner de bonheur, à la nouvelle de la … seconde Indépendance.
> --Non, ils doivent, au contraire trembler de honte et d'horreur d'entendre leur Haïti – naguère si fière— dire « merci » à l'honorable et généreux Monsieur Roosevelt pour une Indépendance qu'ils avaient eux-mêmes conquise au son de la mitraille et des canons, au prix de leur sang et de sacrifices insoupçonnés jusque-là. *Ne comparons pas 1934 à 1804. Deux dates historiques, oui, mais combien différentes l'une de l'autre.* 1804 : proclamation glorieuse de l'Independence d'Haïti après des luttes incessantes par des citoyens jaunes et noirs de la petite île opprimée par les Français ! 1934, hélas !

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rudesses, quel heureux rêve pour une nation qui voudrait vivre dans la quiétude de ses aspirations ethniques ». ["Oh ! If only we could give ourselves the illusion *of transporting your time to ours,* with a few errors or severe episodes edited out, what a joyous dream for a nation that would like to live in the quietude of its ethnic aspirations"] Leconte, *Henri Christophe dans l'histoire d'Haïti*, p. 448. Emphasis mine.

[383] "La grève des étudiants de l'Ecole centrale d'Agriculture avait amené une affolante perturbation dans le monde américain ». ["The student strike of the Ecole centrale d'Agriculture had brought about a frightening perturbation in the American world"] Valcin, p. 101.

> …libération…évacuation pacifique d'Haïti…grâce aux besoins de la politique du Président des Etats-Unis…et, ô, ironie ! …deuxième Indépendance…[384]
>
> [--Myrtana, the spirits of your ancestors must be shaking with happiness at the news of the…second Independence.
> --No, rather, they must be trembling of shame and horror at the sound of their Haiti—once so proud—saying "thank you" to the honorable and generous Monsieur Roosevelt for an Independence that they had themselves achieved by the sound of gun fire and canons, at the price of their blood and by sacrifices yet unsuspected. *Let us not compare 1934 to 1804. They are two historical dates, yes, but, oh how different they are one from the other.* 1804: the glorious proclamation of the Independence of Haiti after unceasing struggles by the yellow and black citizens of the little island oppressed by the French! 1934, alas!...liberation…peaceful withdrawal from Haiti…thanks to the political needs of the President of the United States…and, oh, irony…second Independence…"]

Myrtana's response to Laurence is especially illuminating in that, in order to justify her violent opposition to Laurence's historical allegory, she precisely distills the essence of each period whose distinctiveness should then be evident. In Myrtana's account the teleology of the Haitian Revolution was both unifying, bringing together the nation's two distinct communities of color, and anticolonial, seeking to free the island of its oppressive French tyrants. Notably, allusions to radical antislavery are absent. That the speech acts that rendered Haiti independent went unrecognized in the international community for the years to follow ignores, Myrtana suggests, that what made them felicitous *for Haitians* was that they were pronounced *by Haitians* when they arrived at the end of their revolutionary, restorative telos ("Haiti") in 1804.

In contrast, "1934" appears not as the realization of any anti-American, Haitian-led objective. While it is true that the Americans did, in fact, leave, they did so not as the result of the success of the anticolonial tactics of Haitians but out of calculated, political self-interest. If Myrtana's pained rephrasing of "libération" as "évacuation pacifique d'Haïti," casts pacifism in a startlingly negative light, it is no doubt because, denied the violent anticolonial clashes out of which a true, because

[384] Valcin, pp. 213-4. Emphasis mine.

self-declared, independence might have been won, the twentieth-century re-enactment of the Haitian Revolution was aborted not defeated. After all, the defeat of anticolonial forces would still have been legible within the Dessalinian revolutionary script of liberty or death ("aya bombé"). And indeed they were. This is why, despite the jubilant cries coming from the street, Myrtana ends the novel in tears of gratitude, mourning Charlemagne Péralte and other anticolonial warriors who alone "ont bien mérité la patrie, pour avoir essayé, malgré leurs faibles moyens, de la protéger contre l'ENVAHISSEUR BLANC" ["are deserving of the homeland, for having tried, despite their limited means, to protect it against the WHITE INVADER"] (215). The empowering promise of legendary vengeance coursing through the veins of twentieth-century Haitians, to which we bore witness in the pre-1934 portion of the novel, was to remain unfulfilled.

In attempting to bind the ways in which the "second independence" should be read, it is almost as if Myrtana were transposing the dialectic of the master and the slave onto the realm of anticolonial struggle. If, as Susan Buck-Morss notes in her reading of Hegel, "freedom cannot be granted to slaves from above," if *self-liberation* requires a "trial by fire," then the "premature" departure of the Americans constituted a radical foreclosure of the dialectic process that had once overdetermined the meanings of the revolution of 1804[385]. In other words, while today we still speak, like Laurence, of a "second independence," we do not speak of a "second Haitian Revolution"; the guerrilla reaction to the American restoration of forced labor is

[385] Buck-Morss, Susan. *Hegel, Haiti and Universal History*. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2009. p. 55.

known today only as the Caco *revolt*, a term of impermanent political upheaval that lacks the futurity of modern "revolution"[386].

Implicit in the notion of a "second" independence, however, is the fantasy of a return to the antecolonial state of affairs. This is, after all, why Laurence suggests that the spirits of Myrtana's ancestors would be pleased at the departure of the Americans. But as Dessalines noted in his lamenting of the omnipresent traces of the French on Haitian institutions, this antecolonial past is irreparably lost to the postcolonial[387]. (And this, even as the nomenclature of Haiti itself, grasped so forcefully for this past.) If the departure of the Americans had created the notable and important real-life, but surface, effects of a revolution—Haiti was once again a sovereign nation—I would like to conclude by asking what kind of future was conceivable right after 1934.

By now it should no longer surprise us to note when novels conclude at the very moment when "revolution" has succeeded; indeed, *La Blanche négresse* ends with the *Dessalinienne*, Haiti's national anthem, playing in the streets. On the one hand, we could see Valcin as an exceptional case by noting that her account, having exhausted contemporary history (*La Blanche négresse* is published in 1934), has reached the present. However, that does not mean that Valcin could not have anticipated other futures (if only in the mode of aspirations) in the fictional world of

[386] Dubois, *Haiti and the Aftershocks of History*, pp. 259-260.

[387] Twentieth century Haitian postcolonialism was not immune to this realization. "Like the generation of 1804, the activists of the 1930s discovered that the legacy of foreign control was extremely difficult to escape. The U.S. Occupation had profoundly changed the country, smashing the political and economic order that had emerged during the nineteenth century and deepening the poverty of the countryside. It had centralized and strengthened the government's authority, giving the country's leaders more power than they had ever had to control the masses and suppress dissent." Dubois, p. 267.

her novel. As I have mentioned elsewhere, this is the certainly the case when Laurence expresses a relative certainty of a future in which a feminist revolution will have established more equitable gender relations in marriage and in which women will be free to pursue a variety of high-profile occupations. Yet the text says nothing about what political or social realities Haitians should expect more generally following the end of American occupation. The future of this second bout of Haitian postcoloniality remained as tenaciously ineffable as it had been in the first instance.

Conclusions

As we have seen, the texts of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century exhibit an overarching preoccupation with the relationship between memory and mourning. Though each thought through the question in its own way, the texts of authors including, but not limited to, Massillon Coicou, Frédéric Marcelin, and Léon Laleau all posited that though Haitians had not "forgotten" the Revolution—in the sense that they were able to recite and transmit key details—these acts of remembrance had become uncoupled from a sincere expression of national grief. That is, rather than serving to bridge the ideals of the past with the concerns of the present, the repeated discourses of the Haitian Revolution had become a politically potent but conceptually vacant impetus to meaningful change. Could recollections of the Haitian revolutionary past be mobilized, they wondered, in a significant way that mourned the deaths of the ancestors and yet simultaneously freed those in the present to act independently of a script that was no longer viable?

So long as this question remained unresolved, the dead could not rest in peace. And indeed they did not; it hardly bears repeating at this point that the texts of this corpus are often quite literally haunted with the distressed dead of the revolutionary past. Since the dead are often unable to speak for themselves, readers depend on the necroglossic capabilities of these texts to mediate, translate and interpret the intentions of the deceased viewed by speakers and narrative authorities. Often, the response given by these works is an anxiety of culpability; the political infighting of then contemporary Haitians was seen as squandering the territorial inheritance that Dessalines had bequeathed to them.

Yet, if Dessalines is immanently present as a troubled ghost, only a few intellectuals were able to acknowledge *and link* the unnatural and untimely circumstances that led to his death—an assassination—with the unending "revolutions" that had plagued the nation since his death. In other words, what if Dessalines's spectral presence in these texts was overdetermined, in part, by this anxiety, and what if culpability lay not only in their present, but, more troubling, in the very foundational past? Could it be that Dessalines wept for himself and for the foundational, and unacknowledged political "fratricide" that had inaugurated all of the others?

Noting the otherwise obvious connection between "revolution" and the question of "the beginning," Arendt remarks upon the less evident, but not less documented, fundamental link between violence and origins. "Cain slew Abel, and *Romulus slew Remus*; violence was the beginning, and, by the same token, no

beginning could be made without using violence, without violating."[388] Complicating the idea of "revolution" as a return to "1804," then, is the uncomfortable assassination of Dessalines just two years later; for how is it that we do justice to the life *and death* of the revolutionary leader when we are drawing inspiration from the ideals and struggles of the early Haitian past if we cannot address this violence? How can we hope to avoid the legacy of "1806" if "1804" is our destination? Arendt's reference to Remus and Romulus is particularly telling in our case since, as we'll recall, these were *precisely* the names that Emeric Bergeaud selected for the two brothers in his retelling of the Haitian Revolution. Only that in his retelling, Bergeaud ended his novel promptly at the proclamation of 1804, and thus averts all references to the impending assassination that his proper names reluctantly acknowledge.

For his part, Massillon Coicou, in the preface to his play *L'Empereur Dessalines* (1907), explicitly links "revolution," as an unending iteration, with the untimely death of the founding father. "Ce crime qui a fait à la patrie un mal incalculable, un mal vraiment fécond ; car nous l'expions encore dans la logique des événements de l'histoire […]. *La série de nos révolutions sans nombre, et trop souvent sans nom, remonte jusqu'à celle-là* » [«This crime has inflicted an incalculably deep wound to the nation, a truly fertile wound ; because we continue to atone for it in the very logic of the unfolding of the events of history. […] *The series of our revolutions without number, and often without name, can be traced back to that one*"] (iii).[389] Similarly, Christian Werleigh in his poem, *Défilée la folle* (1927), which recounts the

[388] Arendt, p. 10. Emphasis mine.

[389] Coicou, Massillon. *L'empereur Dessalines: drame en deux actes et en vers : Acte premier*. Port-au-Prince : Imprimerie Edmond Chenet, 1907. p. III. Emphasis mine.

tale of the infamous mad woman who, like a modern Antigone, collected the hacked pieces of the assassinated Dessalines so that he might be given a proper burial, notes that the future was closed off by his assassination. "Un jour, les Fils infortunés devront se battre : / ils verront tout à coup s'effondrer l'avenir / Et repentants, ils saurant, eux, se souvenir, / du Titan de Dix-Huit-Cent-Quatre. / Un siècle après,—car il n'en faut pas moins / pour mesurer par la profondeur de l'abîme, / l'hauteur de l'essor et la grandeur du crime » [One day, the unfortunate sons will have to fight one another: / all of sudden they will see the future collapse before them/ And repentant, they will know to remember / the Titan of Eighteen-Oh-Four. / A century later, -- because it will not be any sooner/ before they are able to measure the depths of the abyss, / the height of his rise, and the extent of their crime"] (4).[390] If revolution always requires a founding violence, how then, do we come to acknowledge not only the deaths through which Haiti came to be, but the occluded patricide of its primary founding father? The way forward, these texts theorize, begins with a reckoning of this traumatic historical fact.

La Vengeance de Mama proposed another solution. As I have shown, Josilus' centennial revolution was, at the very least, discursively conceived along the lines of an opening towards a Haitian future that was radically new. As a call to demilitarization and personal protections enshrined in a constitution that was at last respected, it was difficult to reconcile with the Dessalinian call for the vengeful, postcolonial anticolonialism of "1804." That he did not want to conceive of his political action in the vein of a *restoration* is evident in his active and vehement

[390] Werleigh, Christian. *Défilée la folle.* Port-au-Prince: Chéraquit, 1927. p. 4.

rejection of all elements which could contaminate his project via an association with the past. Yet, as I have theorized, Josilus' call for a civilian government actually *overwrites* the origin of Haitian history because it was the Haitian generals—Dessalines, first and foremost among them—that uttered the speech acts that proclaimed the nation's independence. They were its literal and enunciatory condition of possibility. To posit a new, non-violent origin is, in some way, to displace Dessalines and to get around the founding patricide; recall the absolute care that Josilus took to ensure that the corrupt Haitian president was judged fairly and treated kindly after his revolution. Another indication of this displacement is what I have called his "Louverturian" aims for the rural peasant class. By harkening to a time when it was possible to imagine the compatibility between *freedom* from slavery and the *unfreedom* from rigorous plantation work, Josilus attempts to absorb the tension in the multiple, competing understandings of liberty and pre-empt the later Dessalinian period. Unlike the radical novelty that awaited his urban followers, Josilus suggests that what is needed by the agrarian poor is a return to ordered, structured life on the plantation where they might cultivate not only sugar cane but the value of personal responsibility and work. Importantly, however, Zulma, whose personal strategy of *boule kay* signals the start of the revolution, shows just how difficult it was to conceive of "revolution" absent the Dessalinian trace.

Finally, in the second half of this chapter I turned to two works dating from the concluding stages of the American occupation. Because these texts encompass the period just preceding and just following the end of American occupation, they are instrumental in examining the ways in which the discourses of "revolution" and

"1804" were thought through not only in the wake of the revalorization of the Haitian peasantry—the so-called "true" inheritors of the anticolonial Dessalinian tradition—but once the Americans at last departed. Brierre's *Drapeau* too is literally haunted by the spirit of Dessalines, alternately furious and dejected by the eradication of his anticolonial, antislavery legacy. Reading *Drapeau* in the mode of possession –textual, spectral, or racial—allowed me to comment on the text's tendency to improvise upon the revolutionary slogans of the early nineteenth century and distance them from a scriptural tradition incompatible with an illiterate "elite." Furthermore, as we saw in the closing visions of the old man, the "revolution" that *Drapeau* imagines is primarily conceived in terms of a restoration; it is the re-enactment (of the flag, of "Vertières"), the play suggests, that allows Dessalines and the old man to rest in peace. In the end, the play posits that what is needed is a transnational extension of the explicitly national, Haitian Revolution to all the blacks of the world, including Haitians, suffering under race oppression. *La blanche négresse,* at least initially, is in agreement. As we saw, prior to the moment when the Americans departed, twentieth century resistance to the American occupation of Haiti was conceived of in terms of a genetic inheritance; the restoration of the revolutionary flames of "1804" was wielded as a legitimate threat to set right the wrongs of colonization. However, when the Americans left, not as the result of successful anticolonial action, but for reasons of political expediency, the recurring anticolonial revolution(s) of "Caonabo/Dessalines/Péralte" was aborted before being allowed to reach its logical conclusion (*either liberty or death*). And this freedom given, but not earned, weighed heavily not only on the living—Myrtana is moved to tears—but the dead, who are left

shuddering in horror and shame with no way to appease them. The question of death and the question of the meaning of "revolution" are thus intimately intertwined.

Paradoxically, for all of the prophets and proleptic figures that abound in Haitian literature, the corpus is rarely able to speak the future. In their frequent revelation of desires and anxieties surrounding the "revolution," its consequences, whether immediate or long-term, are rarely addressed. The "post" of the revolution is inevitably cropped and left in the margins (Chauvet); it is ineffable and seemingly beyond imagination. As I have been arguing this may be, in part, a desire for "revolution" as restoration that simultaneously avoids the patricide (*of father, of nation*) of "1806"; this is most evident in retellings of the Haitian Revolution such as *Le Drapeau de demain* or even *Stella*. *The proclamation of independence is ever so edifying, let us stop there.* Yet even in texts which explicitly bring attention to the distance between their time and the time of "1804" the structure remains. So it is that Josilus' *post-coup* speech, a proclamation of his revolution's independence from the past, if you will, ends the novel before readers are able to see what it is the future might look like under his reforms. Similarly, *La blanche négresse*'s closing scene involves an allusion to the end of the occupation, but not what a future determined by Haitian sovereignty in the 1930s will look like. The desire to rewrite the origin, either as a restoration, or as a new beginning, seems to shirk from the incomprehensible ineffability that one day, against all odds, the precarious union that anticolonialism and antislavery once held together might fracture, and that that violence, turned inwards, might itself be part of the irresistibility of the modern revolutionary process.

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EPILOGUE

Where, *then*, do we go from here? How do we escape the event horizon of the Haitian Revolution? How do we do justice to the revered heroes of the past *and* allow for fuller historical agency for those acting in the present? How do imaginings of the future (as something other than a re-enactment of the past) become possible? Are they strictly necessary for Haiti to overcome the accumulated problems of centuries of asymmetric relations with the powers of the international community, or, can the figures of the revolutionary pantheon still provide Haitians with the necessary inspiration for long-term, systemic change that might allow it to be rid of some of its central structural problems? These questions of a frustrated and deferred futurity are all important and indeed take on a new valence as earthquake relief has transitioned (or attempted to transition) into more permanent reconstruction efforts. After all, from an immediate desire to 'restore' "Saint-Domingue" to France to Bill Clinton's "Build back better," the international community has itself never lacked for visions of what the future should hold for Haiti. Indeed, the very fact that Haitians themselves continue to be largely excluded—through NGOs and international bodies—from important debates about where and how aid funds collected on their behalf should be spent, sends a powerful signal about who is and is not permitted to imagine a future for Haiti.

But let us take a step back. As many of the major texts analyzed in this study made painstakingly clear: the Haitian Revolution was the condition of possibility of Haitian history not only in the sense that it changed the geopolitical state of the early

nineteenth century Transatlantic slave zone, but because it made all of Haitian history intelligible. *Everything* from Columbus to the American occupation could now be understood in anticolonial (often antislavery) terms that would have been familiar to the revolutionary insurgents. Haitian intellectuals such as Henri Chauvet noted and signed on to the historical muteness of the post-revolutionary era understood on its own, non-analogous terms. Others, seeking to escape this return, imagined novel revolutions that would open up the future, but the future of these revolutions, (as with the first revolution) is rarely, if ever, articulated.

It is perhaps not surprising, then, that modern commentators have looked precisely to the revolutionary period as a way forward for Haiti. Laurent Dubois noted that out of hopelessness Haitians once created "a new and better world for themselves," seemingly hoping, in the final breath of his history of Haiti since independence, that Haitians could modernize the terms and stakes of the Haitian Revolution for the twenty-first century.[391] Dubois might have had several understandable reasons for avoiding a discussion of the future in more specific terms—the demands of historical writing, or a desire to defer these decisions to Haitians—but his conclusion *itself* nevertheless reads like scores of Haitian texts reviewed in this study. Cautiously optimistic yet notably silent on matters of the future.

But Dubois is not the only commentator to look back to the revolution as a way forward. By April of 2010, mere months after the earthquake, Steven Stoll, writing for Harper Magazine, was calling for a "Second Haitian Revolution" as a way

[391] Dubois, Laurent. *Haiti: The Aftershocks of History.* New York: Metropolitan Books, 2012. p. 370.

of instituting a future in Haiti that would, like the first revolution hoped to do, increase self-sufficiency and agrarian autonomy while simultaneously ending the failed "development" projects of the last several decades[392]. In short, he argued that Haiti should be allowed to become a small-scale subsistence economy fueled by the Haitian peasants, largely free of the pressures of foreign governments and international organizations, and interacting with global capitalism only with surpluses that ensure the autonomy of its agrarian class. Explicit in Stoll's argument is an acknowledgement of the warfare he is waging on ideologies of historical progress implicit in theories of *development* aid. "People once called isolated and unproductive now starve from being integrated and unemployed. They starve, in other words, from the very dependency that represents their modernity. […] Progress for Haitians, means invigorating the countryside under their ownership, their cultivation, their control; it means helping the government help its smallholders"[393]. While Stoll provides a daring, compassionate, and challenging vision of the Haitian post-earthquake future, it is less clear how we are to get to *there* from *here*. Does this "second revolution" consist primarily of government-backed land distribution efforts *or* is the land distribution the result of a revolution whose forms, desires and potential violence are alluded to but occluded? (*"Toward* a Second Haitian Revolution*"*). Is this "second revolution" simply a reference to the global epistemic violence of the first—*Haiti proves that "progress" is not what you think it is*—or is that a potential revolution might entail a non insignificant loss of Haitian life (landowning and not) before achieving its stated

[392] Stoll, Steven. "Toward a Second Haitian Revolution." *Harper's Magazine.* April 2010. 7-10. Print.
[393] Stoll, p. 10.

aims ? And, importantly, in this "revolution" carried out in their name, what role do the peasants themselves play?

Stoll's conclusion, which provides a brief genealogy of the ways in which capitalist discourses have characterized the agrarian as "backward," and progress-resistant[394], suggest the epistemic violence of his revolutionary argument, but also highlights a tension that has been present in contemporary writings seeking to articulate Haiti's relationship to modernity. Was the revolution that led to Haiti's founding constitutive of modernity itself, as Sibylle Fischer has argued, but ultimately disavowed because it was on the losing end of ideological, political and cultural conflicts about what was meant by "modernity" and "progress"?[395] Or, was it rather part a project of Enlightenment countermodernity, ushering in a conflict, as Nick Nesbitt has stated, between "the forces of modernization and an antimodern, egalitarian society"?[396]

As conversations about Haiti's relationship to modernity and the future continue to animate Haitian Studies, we might do well to recall that though Haitian writings offer few concrete descriptions of the future, through their literature Haitians often violently contested the notion that Haitians were inherently destined (because black) to remain outside of the narratives of modernity and progress. Or that Europe and the United States were as 'civilized' as they claimed to be. In fact, Haitians writing in the greater nineteenth century were quick to point out that claims of

[394] « The agrarian household so perplexed and infuriated its critics *because it seemed to deny historical progress.* It was not in a process of becoming something else." Stoll, p. 10. Emphasis mine.
[395] Fischer, Sibylle. *Modernity Disavowed : Haiti and the Cultures of Slavery in the Age of Revolution.* Durham: Duke University Press, 2004. p. 37.
[396] Nesbitt, Nick. *Universal Emancipation : The Haitian Revolution and the Radical Enlightenment.* Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2008. pp. 5-6.

"civilizational attainment" by these so-called advanced states were tautological performative speech-acts of self-fashioning whose actions were often anything but. The difference between a "civilized" nation and one that was not, then, had less to do with the political, social, and scientific realities of its citizens than the ability to have the performative be felicitous. *If it suffices to say that I am civilized to be civilized then I am, indeed must be, civilized.*

Time and time again Haitians pointed to this reflexive character of "civilization." In the opening chapter of Cléante Valcin's *La blanche négresse* (1934) an African-American who is about to be lynched by a white mob in Georgia cries out, "Assassins, he said, you *who call yourselves civilized* and yet do what primitives have never done, you take young girls, children, defenceless old people, and demand fabulous ransoms to have them returned to their families, sometimes killing them" (12).[397] The lynching of another African-American in Georgia serves as one more acerbic critique of American "civilization" in Fernand Hibbert's *Les Thazar* (1907). "Another negro lynched in Georgia? […] Why? Because he was suspected of lusting after a white woman. At every instant our brothers are hanged, crushed, exterminated under the least founded accusations, outside of all of the regulations of even the most elementary justice, and this *in a country that calls itself civilized!*"(84).[398] Similarly, Anacaona, the Amerindian chieftain protagonist of the 1929 play, *Anacaona*, contrasts the inconsistency of the label with the policies of ethnic violence used by the Spanish. "*Ah! All of your words: Progress! Civilization!* / *It's you who have created them*, you,

[397] Valcin, Cléante. *La blanche négresse.* Port-au-Prince : Imprimerie-Editeur, 1934. p. 12. Translation and emphasis mine.
[398] Hibbert, Fernand. *Les Thazar.* Port-au-Prince : Editions Deschamps, 1988. p. 84. Translation and emphasis mine.

great nation, / you, *white barbarians*, who in a twisted manner, / depending upon your numbers and your force, / abuse without pity the smallest of peoples" (79).[399] While it's important to note the traces of a Haitian discourse critical of civilizational claims by foreign states, the instances of racialized violence I've highlighted here weren't simply used to show that the other countries weren't as advanced as they claimed, but, in some cases, that Haiti was, because of its founding principle of racial equality, *ahead* of other nations. Indeed, the character reading about the lynching in Georgia in the morning paper in *Les Thazar* ends his commentary by wondering when a North American Dessalines might appear to bring justice to blacks in the twentieth century American South. Read in this way, Haiti's "progress" relative to other unjust states is more than implied in C.L.R. James' understanding of pre-revolutionary Saint-Domingue. "It was this intelligence that refused to be crushed, these latent possibilities, that frightened the colonists, *just as it frightens the whites in Africa today* [1938]" (18)[400].

In essence this has been part of the larger problem of how to characterize Haiti's relationship to its future and to ours. How do we resolve the seeming contradiction at the heart of Haiti's history which simultaneously appeared undeniably *ahead* of our own (on issues of racial justice) and *behind* (on measures of national, and private, economic well-being)? Numerous Haitian literary texts have confronted this temporal aporia by pointing alternately to political factors such as the internecine

[399] Burr-Reynaud, Frédéric and Dominique Hippolyte. *Anacoana: poème dramatique, en vers, en trois actes et un tableau.* Port-au-Prince, Haïti : Imprimerie Telhomme, 1941. p. 79. Translation and emphasis mine.
[400] James, C.L.R. *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint Louverture and the San Domingo Revolution.* New York: Vintage Books, 1989. P. 18. Emphasis mine.

power struggles of the late nineteenth century, to the widespread so-called "antimodern" observation of vodou practices, or to the crippling economic effects of debt-repayment to France for the recognition of its independence, all of which hindered, they claimed the development of "progress" and "civilization" in Haiti. None, however, lost hope; against the fiercest tides of racist ideologies, none assumed that their *free blackness* was incompatible with autonomous governance and each situated Haiti's failures within a specific political, economic, and cultural history that had been the legacy of radical antislavery. The texts of this study also demonstrate that Haitians repeatedly held out hope that these obstacles could be overcome and saw themselves as equally worthy to partake of a "progress" that seemed only deferred not undeserved.

Recently, however, others have taken on this question of Haiti's place in the timeline of world history by situating it not in an ostensibly underdeveloped past, but rather as belonging instead to a troubling future. In his review of Amy Wilentz's most recent book, *Farewell, Fred Voodoo* (2013), Madison Smartt Bell, himself famous for his trilogy of spellbinding novels recounting the Haitian Revolution, ends by noting the perhaps controversial connection that Wilentz has made between Haiti and our future. "Haiti might represent a microcosm of our own future—crippled by depleted resources, destroyed environments, dysfunctional economies, and governments too preoccupied with political infighting to manage such problems effectively."[401] In this view, Haiti emerges as a potent placeholder for the fears of the progressive left of what America might look like if it were ever to fall fully into Neoconservative hands

[401] Bell, Smartt Madison. "Nine Years in One Day: On Haiti". *The Nation. n.p.* 15 Jan 2013. Web. 1 July 2013.

in the future: at once a parable of the abuses of the global free market, unbridled privatization of services essential to the public good, increasing electoral unfairness, disinterest in the preservation of natural resources, and widespread hunger, poverty and need. That is, unlike the implicit narratives of increasing technological and scientific progress which undergird our own speculative fictions of the future—from space exploration to artificial intelligence and beyond—Wilentz seems to suggest that other, rather more dystopian futures might await us at the other end of modernity. Indeed, the increasingly vocal admonitions from the scientific community of the catastrophic consequences of global inaction on the issue of climate change overlap uncomfortably with Wilentz's characterization of Haiti. After having spent much of *Farewell, Fred Voodoo* lost in interrogations about what it is that brings Westerners to Haiti, Wilentz wonders if, among other things, in saving Haiti (or attempting to save Haiti) Westerners may in some ways be unconsciously rehearsing to save their own civilizations from this intuited decline.[402]

This is all rather cynical, it's true, but what makes us uncomfortable in Stoll's proposal and in Wilentz's characterization is perhaps less the idea that we have repeatedly failed Haiti—though there is that—than the fact that in each case, the "future" of Haiti is the starting point for reflections upon our own horizon of expectations. In the case of Wilentz, readers may be haunted by the notion that course of history might one day advance without "progress" not only for Haiti, but for us; that

[402] « Maybe those people who go down so anxiously and generously to repair Haiti and build nice houses and move people from one camp to another, and put in sanitation systems and recycling programs and prepare AIDS cocktails, and prenatal care and rape kits and write books about the place are all unconsciously hoping that in trying to save Haiti, they'll be able to save themselves, setting the scene for a future rescue of humanity". Wilentz, Amy. *Farewell, Fred Voodoo: A letter from Haiti.* New York: Simon & Schuster, 2013. p. 304.

our way of understanding history is somehow in the midst of shifting out from underneath us, and, in the case of climate change, that we are the cause of it. So while Wilentz posits, perhaps too flippantly, an impending global disaster that signals the end of progress, Stoll would have us revaluate what it is that we mean by "progress" so that "non-progress" might not be equated with degeneration, decline, and death but rather with the preservation of life. Both, in other words, find in Haiti illuminating illustrations that call into question the narrative of progress so central to modernity's understanding of historical time. Is this the ideological threat of Haiti updated for the twenty-first century?

In the course of presenting my research I am often asked what it is *I* believe the future holds for Haiti, since the Haitian texts I am generally discussing feature what I have been referring to as "compressed" Revolution-centric time. Then, as now, I have been reluctant to speak to this question directly in part because I am not Haitian (nor of Haitian descent), but also because I am not in a position, despite my extensive research on the country and its literature, to speak to the lived realities and contemporary needs of the vast majority of Haitians in the wake of the earthquake. The last thing Haiti needs is another *blan* (*foreigner*) imposing his vision of the future upon its citizens. What I will say is that while I agree with the spirit of Stoll's land redistribution plan I cannot see how such a distribution will take place without a broad coalition composed of many, many members of the peasantry, some of the landowners, and some international support. I say this because it is impossible to come away from Johnathan Katz' account of the failures of post-earthquake reconstruction, *The Big Truck that Went By* (2013), without a pessimistic understanding of the way in which

land ownership (and so purchases and transfers) in Haiti is rendered precarious by competing claims over legitimate ownership that are often difficult if not impossible to trace in material, government records.[403] Given these difficulties, a serious land redistribution effort on the scale of what Stoll envisions may not be possible without an important loss of life. As such, Haitians themselves (of all classes) must be allowed to decide what is in the best interests of the many, whether that be a "Second Haitian Revolution" in the vein of what Stoll is calling for, or some other, altogether as of yet unthinkable, spontaneous political action.

Speaking as a *blan* but also as one who has a deep respect for the literature of Haiti, and certainly more respect than some Haitians, what I will say is that time and time again this literature calls for a return to the Haitian Revolution (both in content and form) as if there were a collective understanding of its unfinishedness. It also allowed us to name this phenomenon and point to the anxiety surrounding this always present revolutionary past of which the ghosts are but one symptom. Perhaps another revolution will indeed rid Haitians of this lingering, centuries-old sense of incompleteness, but what if the *gravity of revolution* obscures the form such a revolution might take? What if this prescription is itself what makes this new revolution and its forms *unthinkable*? What if, instead of looking to "1804" or thinking along the lines of a "Second Haitian Revolution," we were to look throughout the nineteenth century for other models? What alternative futures emerge when we ask about how Haitians themselves have dealt with the question of the revolution's

[403] Katz, Jonathan M. *The Big Truck that Went By : How the World Came to Save Haiti and Left Behind a Disaster.* Palgrave McMillion, 2013.

unfinishedness? One partial answer is suggested by Dubois in his recounting of the political turmoil of the 1840s.

Allow me to close with this brief tale. In 1843 an organized and largely peaceful "revolution" of the urban and educated classes demanded an end to the authoritarian regime of then President Boyer who had been in power since the reunification of Haiti more than two decades earlier. The "revolution" succeeded not only in deposing Boyer but in instituting a constituent assembly that was tasked with drafting a document in line with the aspirations of the urban revolutionaries. While there is no doubt that the constitution of 1843 was indeed much more liberal, the restrictions it placed on suffrage made it difficult for members of the Haitian peasantry to fully participate in the political process. Taking the revolution as unfinished, members of Haiti's rural kreyòlophone class bonded together and rose up against the new moderate government. The revolutionaries of 1844, led by their leader Acaau, sought assurances of economic security, greater and broader access to democratic institutions, education and other reforms which would specifically benefit the poor. While the movement was rightly seen as dangerous to the Haitian status quo, it ultimately lost much of its force among a series of strategic and symbolic appointments including the black figurehead President, Philippe Guerrier. (Incidentally, Guerrier was the first of the so-called "understudy" presidents that would eventually lead to Emperor Soulouque, where I began this study.) After another failed uprising a few years later, Acaau committed suicide.[404]

[404] This brief account of the political upheaval of 1843-4 is based on Dubois' account in *Haiti*. See, in particular, pp.104-134.

But death is not the end for Acaau. Dubois concludes his chapter on the period by noting the ways in which the spectral presence of Acaau has continued to haunt policy makers and advisors *to this day*.

> Shortly after his death, Céligny Ardouin, a leading political figure who had helped engineer the presidency of Guerrier wrote that it was vital to 'avoid the appearance of a new Acaau.' A modern Historian of French-Haitian relations [François Blancpain, 2001], concludes his work by warning that both foreign and Haitian leaders need to 'watch out' for 'a new Acaau can always appear.' The specter of Acaau serves as a constant reminder that one day a truly democratic movement—one that channels the political aspirations of the entire Haitian population—might appear again, and this time succeed.[405]

What interests me for our purposes here is not only the way in which Acaau has been transformed into a cautionary tale for the anxieties of the elite—both Ardouin and Blancpain speak in paranoid imperatives—but the anachrony that Acaau produces. It is manifest in the writings Dubois cites—'a new Acaau'—but it also pierces Dubois' own language. Over and against the prescribed call for a "Second Haitian Revolution" which closes his chronological account of Haiti's history (2012, p. 370)[406], here, in the failed peasant uprisings of the nineteenth century (1844, p.134), Dubois finds a trace for another potential future that Acaau made thinkable. "The specter of Acaau serves as a constant reminder that one day a truly democratic movement—one that channels the political aspirations of the entire Haitian population—might appear again, and this time succeed"(134). This sentence, there is no doubt about it, could just as easily be placed at the conclusion of his account *back in 2012* were it not for the competing claim of a potential "Second Haitian Revolution." In other words, disciplined into chronology, "Acaau" is not fully

[405] Dubois, pp. 133-4.

[406] « Out of a situation that seemed utterly hopeless, they created a new and better world for themselves. Two hundred years later that remains a reminder of what is possible: if it happened once, perhaps it can happen again." Dubois, p. 370.

neutralized, for he can still be read as responding to our present questioning of the future of Haiti and to the gravity of revolution. "Acaau" is the name we have given to one such trace, let us search the greater nineteenth century for others.

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